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EPTEMBER, 1952

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BRITANNIA and EVE

VOL. 45 No. 3 SEPTEMBER, 1952

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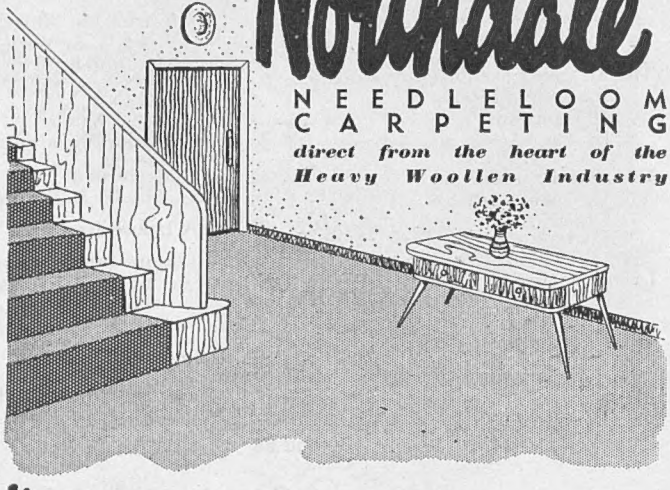

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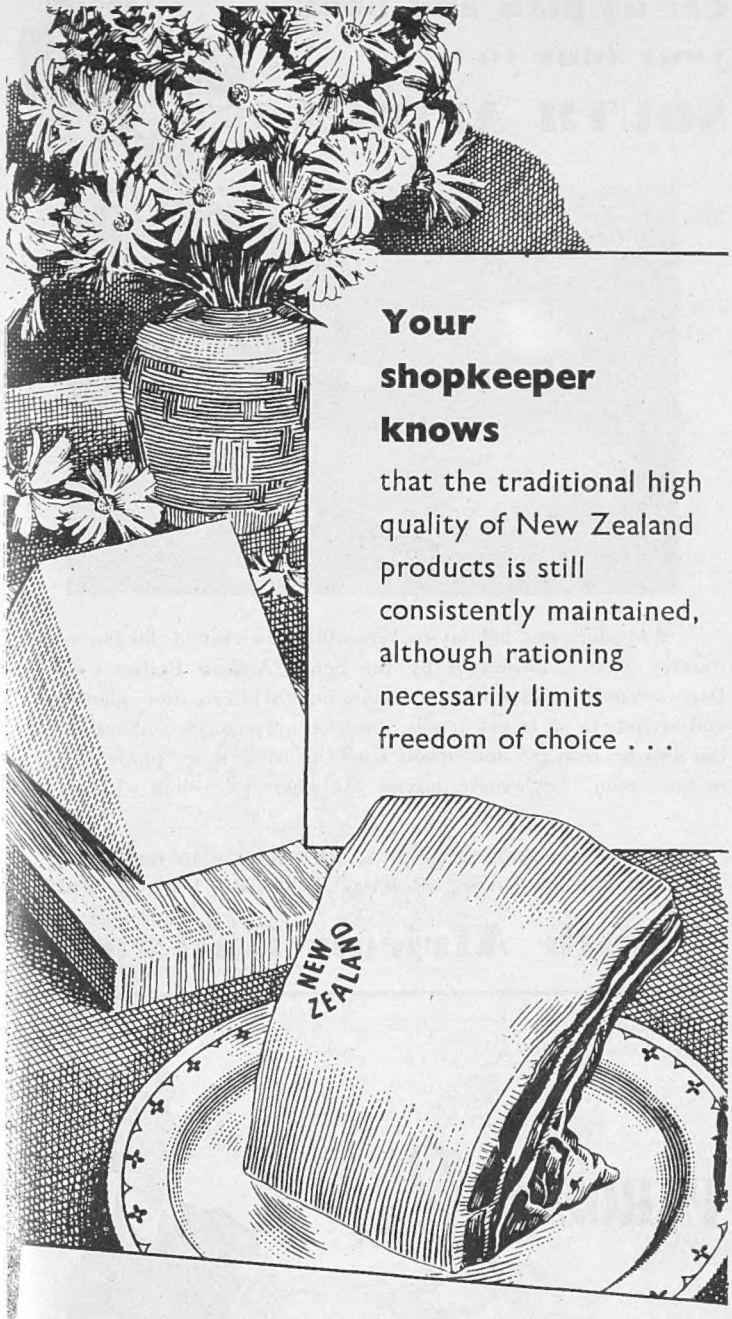

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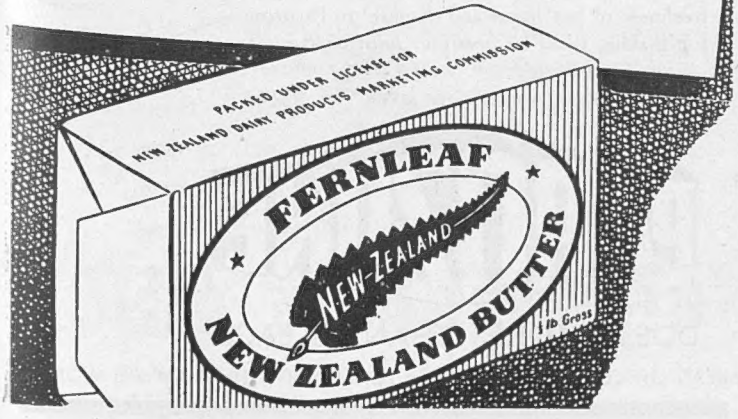

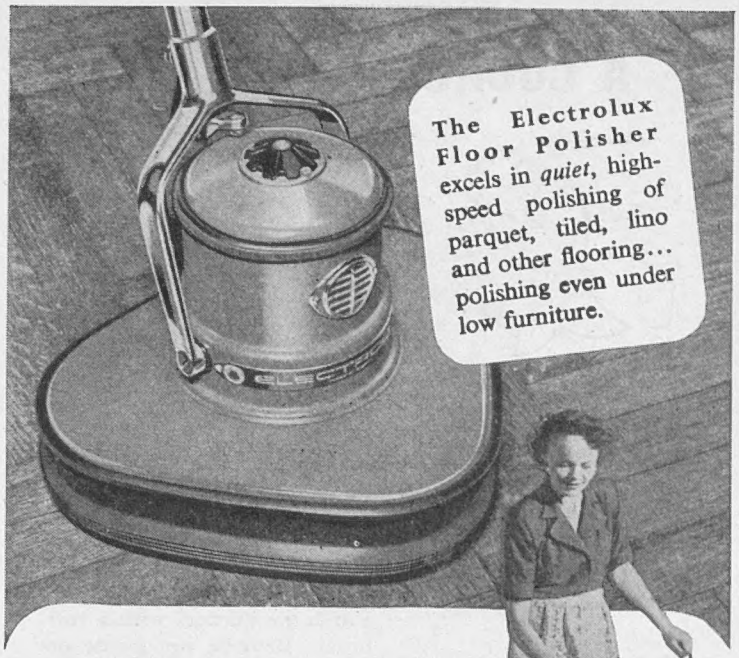

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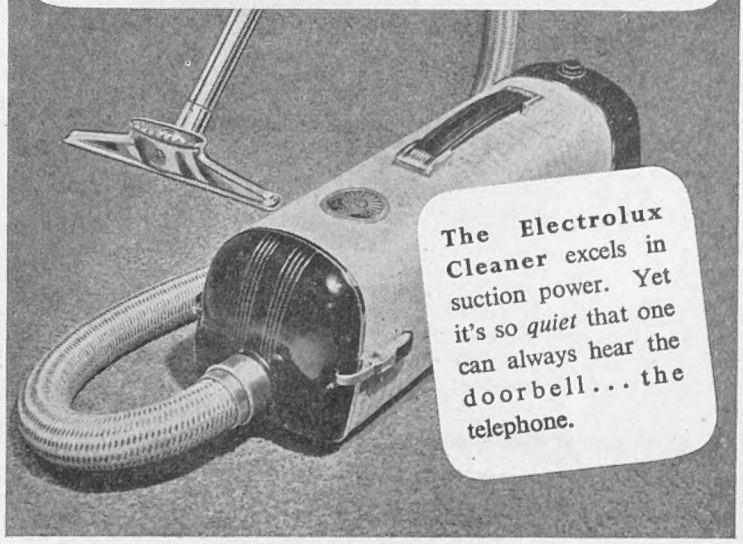

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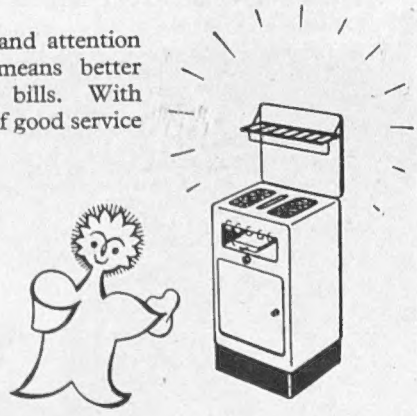

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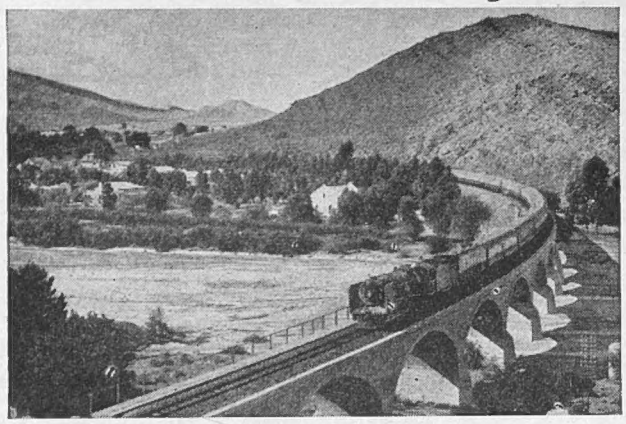

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Dinner With Uncle Matthew

Marian went over to her father, who was slumped deep into his chair.

by

LOUIS GOLDING

THE telephone-bell rang, but no one moved. The secretary would be in from lunch, and she would take it, in the office beyond the landing. She came in a few moments later.

"It's for you, Warden," she said. "The Duke of Lechlade."

"Very well," said Dr. Browne. "I'll take it here." He tried to keep the satisfaction out of his voice and face; but he did not quite succeed. The others nodded and smiled among themselves. There was no getting away from it. The old man liked to be telephoned by dukes.

He rose and went over to the telephone. "The Warden here," he said. "Yes, Edward?" Then, not more than a few seconds later, the time it took him to recognise whose voice this really was, he made a gesture as if to replace the receiver, then restored it to his ear again. The invisible speaker went on for a little time, then stopped speaking.

"Well, Henry?" the other overheard. The instrument was half-an-inch from the Warden's ear. They had no doubt whose voice it was.

"I said *well*, Henry?" the voice repeated.

Then at last the Warden was able to set the vocal chords working.

"I'm sorry, it slipped my mind. We'll send them on by post at once, whatever we can find."

The voice expostulated. Apparently the post would not be quick enough. "One moment," the Warden said, and put his hand over the instrument. Then he turned to his wife.

"He's started," he said. "I knew it would happen. All right. Let him come. I'm not going to be hectored by him." A flush started in his cheeks and seeped slowly over the cheekbones. He was going to explode with fury. Nobody would get anywhere that way. It was going to be very unpleasant for everyone. Then Marian, his daughter, broke in.

"No, father. There's no need to force anything. I'll go. Tell him that. I'll go to-day. I'd like to see Aunt Edith in any case. Ask him exactly where it is." The Warden hesitated. The other might ring off any moment. "I'll tell him myself," she said, and rose from her chair. Her father removed his hand from the mouthpiece. "Are you there?" he asked. "Marian says she'll come over some time to-day." His voice was cold and thin. The flush had receded from his face, leaving it pale as ivory. "When? I don't know. When can you be there, Marian? It's a hard place to find, he says."

Marian came up to the telephone with pad and pencil, and took the instrument from her father's hand.

"Marian here, Uncle Matthew. I'm very well, thank you." She shut her eyes while the voice had its say. Then she resumed: "No, I haven't petrol enough. I'll take the bus. Have you a time-table there?" Apparently he had. She put down times and directions, said "Good-bye," and replaced the receiver.

There was silence while Marian went back to her chair. She raised her cup of coffee to her lips, but it was cold, and she put it down again.

"Shall we get some more made?" asked her mother. But no. No one wanted any more. The air had gone sour, despite the roses in the rose-bowls and the smell of lavender that came in through the open windows from the Fellows' Garden.

"What is he asking for this time?" Mrs. Browne wanted to know.

"It's that old damask linen Aunt Emily left," the Warden said. "You remember. It was to be divided among her nephews. The table-cloths can wait. It's the napkins he wants."

"Yes," said Marian. "He just wants to throw his weight about, I suppose." Her father nodded. "Well, he shall have his table-napkins."

"I don't know where they all are,"

wailed Mrs. Browne. "Some have been lost in the wash. I 'm sure of it."

"There 'll be some to be going on with, won't there ?" asked Marian. "Try and find them, mother. I must go back and tell Cecily I 'll be leaving early. Come along, mother dear, let 's see what we can do about those table-napkins."

Mrs. Browne rose and made for the door. Then she turned. Her husband was slumped deep into his chair. She shrugged her shoulders and went out. The others rose, too, and followed her. Only Marian was left with him.

"Daddy !" she whispered. He did not raise his head. "Daddy !" she said again.

"You 're a good girl, Marian," he whispered. "Where are my spectacles ? Will you get them for me ?"

She got them for him, then went out. There was a flurry going on among chests-of-drawers and in the cistern-cupboard, but only ten of the table-napkins turned up. They went neat and easily into Marian's brief-case. It was believed there should be another eight.

THE stopping-place was opposite the Blue Lion, on the road to Witney. A deep wood marches for some distance along the south side of the main road. The lane leading down to "Hatchetts" was some ten minutes' walk away, where the small cross is.

Marian waited for half-a-minute by the cross, as arranged. No one came. Another half-minute passed. Then at last someone appeared, a woman : it was Aunt Edith, in fact. It was almost as if at the last moment her nerve had failed. You could still see what a pretty woman she had been, though she looked so haggard now, and there were dark half-moons under her eyes.

"Hullo, Aunt Edith !" cried Marian, and ran forward and kissed her. Her cheek was cold, though it was a warm June evening. "You shouldn't have bothered. I 'd have found my way. How are you ?"

"I 'm well, thank you," said Aunt Edith. "You don't know how . . . It 's so *nice* of you !"

Marian slipped her free arm round her Aunt's waist and squeezed it.

"I came to bring the napkins," she said. "But I really wanted to see you . . . now we 're sort of neighbours. They all wanted me to come. You know how fond they are of you. You mustn't, my dear," she brought out urgently. She was aware of the quick catch in Aunt Edith's throat. She couldn't bear it if Aunt Edith broke down and started sobbing on her shoulder. Aunt Edith bit her lip. The danger was over. They turned into the lane. It had not rained for some time and the ridges were sharp and hard. The odour of small flowers, ground ivy and agrimony and pimpernel came up from under the thick undergrowth.

"I understand it 's quite a beautiful house," said Marian. "What do you call it ? 'Hatchetts' ?"

"Yes. Your mother didn't mind my writing, did she ? We were lucky. It 's modern, of course. But there are some rather lovely old things."

"And quite a decent piece of land ?" Marian went on.

Aunt Edith's mind was not working very quickly. She was still thinking about the lovely things. "My grandfather died some months ago. He was a collector." Then her brain registered the other theme. "Oh, land ? Yes, about fifteen acres, on the other side beyond these woods." There was silence for some time. A dove cooed in a high elm near at hand. A dove answered from a tree farther away.

"Enough to keep him busy," said Marian. "Yet not enough to bore him."

"No," Aunt Edith murmured, and the silence fell again.

"Hatchetts" was a good half-mile away. Yes, Aunt Edith had been quite right. You needed someone to guide you there. It was not even a lane in places, just a track. You came upon the house quite suddenly. The woodland dipped down into a dingle, with a stream running under a rustic bridge, and a little pool in a basin, dappled with water-lily leaves. The house was on the farther slope, rising out of flowering espaliers. There were a great many hydrangeas. The late owner of the house had clearly been a specialist in hydrangeas.

"You 'll just have time to tidy yourself up before dinner," said Aunt Edith. "He doesn't like to be kept waiting. We have a married couple living in," she went on. She was making a brave effort at conversation. "He insists on having a man wait at table."

"I wouldn't dream of putting you out. No, aunt, no. I 'll catch my bus." How could she bear to have dinner with him ?

"He specially said you were to stay

They came upon the house quite suddenly. The woodland dipped down into a dingle, with a stream running under a rustic bridge, and a little pool in a basin, dappled with water-lily leaves.

for dinner," Edith pleaded. "He can order a hire-car."

She ignored the hire-car. But she could not ignore the pathos in Edith's voice and eyes. She had better make easy weather of it.

"Well, thank you, if it 's not putting you out. How enchanting it all is! You should be very happy here."

UNCLE MATTHEW came out to greet them when they were within some thirty feet of the red-tiled terrace that fronted the porch above them. You noticed the beard at once, a chestnut-brown silken thing, elegantly pointed in the Vandyck mode. He had not previously effected that type of decoration, so far as she knew, but she could not be certain. The clothes were Savile Row, too, the steely, blue-black dinner-jacket, the impeccably creased trousers, the beetle-shining shoes. It was a stiff shirt and stiff collar. No informal half-measures for

Illustrations by
HODGSON

Uncle Matthew. He was pale, with the sort of pallor you could expect, but his toilet preparations did something to mitigate that. He held out his arms to her.

"Marian," he said. "How very kind you are. You are most welcome." The formality of speech and manner suited the clothes. He came down towards her and laid his lips soft as a leaf falling on her left temple. It might have been taken as a gesture of forgiveness towards Edith his wife, Marian his niece, Henry his brother, everybody, everything.

"It 's very beautiful, Uncle Matthew." She looked round on the ornamental trees, the flower-beds, the sundial, the water-lily pool. "How lucky you are!" Quickly, without a change of tone, she explained: "A place like this coming into the market, so complete." You had to have your wits about you.

"One even has a little bathing-pool," he added, smiling. "You 'll forgive me, won't you? One feels one has to put on a black tie in the evening. One does quite a lot of work in the garden. And there are the animals." Yes, thought Marian, it was very proper of one, and how impersonal one was. "It won't take Edith any time to dress, will it, Edith?" The tone of voice suggested that, on the whole, it had better not. "And, Marian, that *can't* be a little frock you have in the brief-case there?"

"No, uncle. It 's those table-napkins you asked for. Mother hopes some more will turn up."

"Of course! How stupid of me! Dear Marian! And you undertook to bring them over! Really, how kind you are! How many are there, if I may ask?"

"We found ten."

"*Ten?*" he repeated. "There should be eighteen!" There was a green flicker in his eyes, like a darting lizard. Then the lizard was in a cranny, out of sight. The eyes were urbane again. He turned to his wife. "Perhaps you 'll let Marian tidy up? Dinner in half-an-hour, please." How completely he had taken it for granted! He turned and went off into the house.

The house was very charming, and it had every modern convenience. A great deal of money must have been collected from one source or another. It hardly seemed likely that Edith had been able to lay hands on it all herself. Perhaps Matthew had been able to help a little?

"This way," Aunt Edith said, and led her into her own room. It was not the same as her husband's room. Marian tidied up and went down into the sitting-room.

"A gin and something?" asked Uncle Matthew. His sangfroid was beyond praise.

"Pink," said Marian, "thank you." Aunt Edith, not Uncle Matthew, made the drink.

"An olive?"

"Thank you."

"She would like an olive, Edith."

HOW preposterous it all was! How could one human creature exert so deadly a fascination over another!

"Dinner is served," the man-servant announced. It might have been Londonderry House. Uncle Matthew *was* doing himself well. He held out his arm for her. There possibly was a hint of mockery in the gesture, because it was only a few feet from the sitting-room, across the hall, into the dining-room, and Marian's tweed skirt hardly lived up to such elaborateness. She placed her fingertips against the side of his arm muscles and went forward with him. The man threw the door open and stood aside like an image. The dining-room unfolded. The Sheraton table glowed like copper bowls. The silver and glass and Dutch Still Life over the mantelpiece, the decanters and dishes on the sideboard, the rose-bowl on the table . . . it was conventional, but perfect. Really, it 's such deadly *nonsense*, she said to herself.

Then she was aware of a slight stiffening of the muscles against her finger-tips. She turned her head. He was looking at the centrepiece of the table, a bowl of bright pink roses, in a Rose Japan Crown Derby bowl. The eyelids dropped over the eyes, the mouth stiffened. Everything was not perfect, not *quite* perfect. Perhaps the pink of the roses, cheerful, rather on the carmine side, *did* clash a trifle with the salmony pink of the bowl, beautiful though it was? It was the "Doctor," wasn't it, rather a blatant kind of rose, maybe? Uncle Matthew half-turned to his wife.

"Again?" he said. That was all. Edith's mouth puckered like a scolded child's. "Again what?" Marian asked herself. Was it the wrong vase? Were they the wrong roses? The salmony-pink and the carmine! Calamitous conjunctions!

"Will you sit here, Marian?" asked her uncle. The man pulled back her chair. Matthew sat down at the head of the table, Edith at the foot. Her chin was low on her breast.

"I 'm sorry, dear——" she started.

He stroked his beard and gazed at her unblinking for two or three seconds.

"We won't discuss it," he said. That presumably meant the flower arrangement. Salmon-pink, carmine! There was some smoked trout, then a creamed fricassee of chicken. It tasted like real cream, too. (*Continued on page* 60)

Something was wrong. Was it the Rose Japan Crown Derby bowl? the carmine roses? or the calamitous conjunction of the two?

Late shopping finds people in a jolly buying mood when it comes to family parties. . . .

At Los Angeles, you can buy groceries until three o'clock in the morning. . . .

NIGHT Shopping*

by FERDINAND TUOHY

THE "late-Thursday-opening experiment" by which stores and shops remained open until 7 p.m., one evening a week, in London's Regent Street, Oxford Street and Bond Street was a small affair in itself. It meant no more than that staffs stayed an extra ninety minutes, which were promptly made up to them on the succeeding Friday or Monday morning.

Even so, there were organized protests and attempts to nip the extension in the bud. One argument being, forsooth, that the public didn't want it, when all the evidence—of better filled shops and increased sales—pointed the other way.

The truth is, of course, that there are wider implications behind the West End's little experiment, and that this has to be viewed against a background of changing public habits and outlook in relation to shopping in general. Scarcity of money and purchase tax play their part; so do rising transport costs. But it isn't only that kind of thing: there's a dawning consciousness that shopping hours are no longer sufficiently in gear with what the public wishes (or has) to do with its day.

Not to put things too picturesquely I hope, Shops Acts can get weighed down by barnacles. We have already witnessed one big chain store cutting its wage-bill and risking staff reductions as a consequence, because of no light falling off of sales. There is only one cure for that—more sales—and the view is spreading among executives in several lands that the surest and shortest way to recover lost ground is to overhaul shopping hours.

Shops presented little or no problem until about a century ago. Not that there weren't a lot of them. Remember how economist Adam Smith said in 1775 that Britain was a nation of shopkeepers (Napoleon merely copied him), and that Disraeli was proudly admitting the same thing in 1831. Yet those shops of the past were small, private and highly localized affairs which opened and closed more or less at the will of their owners, studying local custom. The real arbiters in the matter were such things as the weather, transport, lighting and public safety. Only in the bigger centres was there a tendency for shopkeepers to band together and ensure common opening hours.

THINGS first began to alter as soon as the industrial revolution got really under way, with direct effect on the habit of life of millions of people. Shops of all kinds multiplied and grew in size. Hours were "sweated" to absorb the new "popular" custom of the back streets and to make the most of sales opportunities to the new moneyed middle classes. But if one were asked to put one's finger on the turning-point, it would be necessary to go outside this country.

About ninety years ago Aristide Boucicaut invented the Paris *Bon Marché*. I use the verb advisedly because this, the first of department stores, gradually revolutionized shopping in all main centres of the world, intensifying it and opening entirely new vistas. Cheap and rapid transport and steeply rising populations did the rest during the second half of the nineteenth century; so much so, that, human nature being what it is, measures had to be taken to stop "sweating" behind the counter. Hence the first of divers Shops Acts here and abroad, and fully justified they were, in order to put a term to grinding ten- and twelve-hour days.

The question now is—has not the pendulum been allowed to swing too far in the opposite direction? Not that there's any question of increasing hours of work; rather—have not sales come to be looked upon too much from the standpoint of staffs who render them possible, and too little from the point of view of the public *which makes them*?

When I asked staff members what they thought of the extra ninety minutes, how hard it was to coax any of them into thinking other than of the effect on themselves. It seemed not to strike them, that they should accommodate other people, namely, the buying public, by a slight adjustment of their private lives, or that it might be in their eventual interest so to do. This, of course, is a state of mind induced by agitators and fuss-pots who go about impressing the doctrine of "my rights," which all too often takes scant note of the rights of others.

In one or two cases I managed to lead staff members to a wider consideration, but it had to be done quickly, dartingly. Did they realize how scarce money had become? The blighting effect (*Continued on page 76*)

Her Majesty fulfils an onerous programme of public duties. Here she is seen on a visit to the "Tottan" which is taking the latest British Expedition to North Greenland

The Cost

SEARCHINGLY enough, in this democratic age, the limelight of publicity plays on the monarchy and all royal affairs. And sometimes, to the uninitiated at least, its beam is less enlightening than deceptive. The Civil List, for instance, that fund allocated for the annual expenses of the Crown, is too often thought to go in its entirety into the personal pocket of the reigning monarch.

The Select Committee on the Civil List, which sits at the beginning of each reign, has recently recommended for the upkeep of the present monarchy the annual sum of £475,000.

Far from being all at the disposal of Queen Elizabeth, this near half-million has to cover a range of royal expenditure which, though necessarily large, is certainly not by present-day standards extravagant.

The Queen herself receives as her personal allowance or Privy Purse a mere £60,000. The rest goes in salaries (£185,000) and expenses (£121,800) of the Royal Household, Royal Bounty (£13,200) and a supplementary provision (£95,000) for other members of the Royal Family.

As much as any other State establishment the monarchy has in recent decades been subjected to the strict probe of economy, until now its expenses could hardly be pared further without endangering the traditions and prestige of royalty.

A comparison of the present Civil List with some of those of the past shows that much of the regal lavishness that once accompanied the maintenance of royalty has gone.

On her sixteenth birthday, the Queen inspected the Grenadier Guards for the first time as their colonel. Ten years later Her Majesty, as Colonel-in-Chief of all Guards regiments, inspected the Grenadier Guards before handing over to her successor

The maintenance of the convention and ceremony which are an integral part of our Royal traditions, becomes increasingly costly

# of being a Queen

For instance, although in the last fifty years the cost of living has trebled, Queen Elizabeth's List is only £5,000 more than that granted to Edward VII.

George VI, whose Civil List was £410,000, had great difficulty in covering the steadily rising costs of the Royal Household. And though after the war certain Government departments shouldered an annual £50,000 of these expenses, the King still had to find in the last year of his reign £42,000 out of his Privy Purse towards them.

THE general post-war picture of royal expenditure has been one of economies which have hardly availed against ever-mounting prices. Every royal department had been scrutinized for possible cuts and while savings have been made, for example, in heating, lighting and cooking expenses and in the royal telephone and telegram bills, forage for the royal horses now costs more than in 1937 even though over half the horses have been got rid of.

Similarly, economies in the upkeep of Balmoral and Sandringham and in the running of the royal garden parties and presentation parties still leave expenditure on those items higher than before the war.

Most notable decrease of all in the present List is in the amount of the Queen's Privy Purse, which is £50,000 less than her father's. (The Queen has generously offered to accept a reduction of £17,000 and it is proposed to relieve the Privy Purse of a further commitment of £33,000, the majority of the provision for the Duke of Edinburgh.)

Behind one increase in the List—£20,000 in provision for Household salaries and expenses—is an encouraging story of self-sacrifice by members of the Household and senior officials. For some years about one hundred of them have voluntarily received less than their due remuneration in the interests of economy. Now it is recommended that their salaries should be raised to the appropriate level.

The biggest new allocation proposed is the £95,000 intended to cover increases in costs and prices during the Queen's reign and out of which the Queen may finance other members of the Royal Family who carry out public duties.

ONE thing that becomes clear from the recommendations and remarks of the twenty-two M.P.s responsible for the allocation of the royal finances is that being a Queen (or King) is nowadays not only a costly business, despite rigid economies, but also a vastly heavier task than ever before.

Like the late King, the present Queen is faced with an ever-growing number of public functions, speeches and appearances. State papers have to be studied in increasing quantities; more documents have to be signed; more audiences granted to official visitors. And, as the Committee's Report points out, while the royal tasks multiply, there are fewer members of the Royal Family to carry them out. In this respect George V, with four sons, was remarkably well served.

For the present Queen and Royal Family, even though every effort is made to moderate their heavy round, there remains an irreducible minimum of visits and journeyings without which they would lose contact with the people—and "the people" now includes the citizens of the Commonwealth and Empire, made accessible as never before through air travel.

Behind the Civil List Committee's reminder that monarchy to-day is no sinecure is the implication that adequate funds for its maintenance should be forthcoming and that the Queen and Royal Family should not, in the carrying out of their exacting tasks, be harassed by financial burdens. (*Continued on page* 62)

By Guy Livingston

The Throne Room at Buckingham Palace, with its three-tiered throne dais beneath an impressive canopy of red and gold velvet, is used for State Investitures and the reception of delegations

Some of the finest pictures of the Royal Collection are hung in the long picture gallery at Buckingham Palace

ARE OUR BIRDS IN PERIL?

By

GARTH CHRISTIAN

A changing national economy which results in the increase of urban populations on the one hand and a decrease of gamekeepers on the other; developments in agricultural methods, embracing an extended use of chemical insecticides and increased mechanization inevitably disturbs the delicate balance of nature. These are fundamental factors affecting our wild bird life

NATURALISTS, even more than most people, are hoping that the coming winter will bring no long spell of hard weather. For a prolonged frost might well prove disastrous for some of our smaller birds.

Already the rare Dartford Warblers, almost wiped out by the grim winter of 1947 and constantly harassed by ruthless egg-collectors and heath fires, have dwindled far towards extinction. Meantime, changing methods of farming and gardening, together with the swift shrinking of our countryside by some 50,000 acres a year, gravely threatens the welfare of many more familiar birds.

During this past summer I have grown tired of the query "Where are our swallows?" Many a handsome Dutch barn and garden shed which has housed successive generations of swallows and martins has remained silent and empty this season. Harsh weather over France in early spring may have killed many of the migrants; but this decline in our swallow tribe has been evident over a number of years.

"The Down Country," wrote W. H. Hudson—in 1900, "appears to have a great attraction for the swallow, house martin and swift. . . . At Ditchling (Sussex) the extraordinary abundance of swallow and swift life interested me more than the traditional yarns about Alfred the Great's connection with the village. . . ." He reported that some 450 house martins were reared in the village by August, "and the total swallow increase would be at least 800."

Judging from what I have seen when visiting Ditchling recently, I doubt if a tenth of that number is reared there nowadays.

Can it be that these birds find it hard to glean mud for their nests in this age of hard motoring roads? Or is the use of D.D.T. and other insecticides causing a sharp decline in the insect population which makes it hard for birds to find food?

ANOTHER important point is that the decline in the use of the horse as a beast of burden has caused a big decrease in the sparrow population of our cities; but it is hard to find trace of any reduction in the country sparrows. Indeed, they seem to be growing far more abundant and are driving swallows, martins and—in several cases I know—spotted flycatchers from their nesting sites. There is little evidence that urban sparrows flock into the country at harvest time; it is more likely that some city sparrows have migrated into the "green-belt" in the breeding season.

Even more mysterious is the reduction in the numbers of chiffchaffs. This season their population in certain districts of east and mid-Sussex has been little more than half last year's number. Yet these birds are not likely to be affected by D.D.T.—or sparrows—since the flies and caterpillars which they eat are found high in trees, bushes or even on the ground about woods and thickets. Yet their cousins the willow warblers remain as plentiful as ever.

Nor have recent years seen any marked decline in the numbers of nightingales; they are even tending to advance westwards and numbers now nest north of the Trent. (*Continued on page* 64)

The Strange Case of Lady Grange

OLD TALES RETOLD

Story by Lewis Stedman
Illustrations by Jack Matthew

WHEN Lord Grange announced his wife's death late in April, 1732, Edinburgh pulsed with fantastic rumours. Lady Grange was not dead. The funeral milord had staged was a sham.

In high Jacobite circles it was known these stories were true. For some years, they said, Lady Grange had been a drunkard and bitter quarrels had forced milord to obtain a legal separation. In revenge his wife had been threatening to denounce Lord Grange's Jacobite activities to the agents of that "wee German lairdie," the Elector of Hanover, who masqueraded in London as King George II. Regretfully Lord Grange found it necessary that his wife "be sequestrated" for the rest of her life in some Highland fastness where she could never jeopardize the cause of the Royal House of Stuart.

Recalling her parentage, the Jacobites thought milord had done well to put his wife away. Had she not inherited the wild spirit of her father—that Chiesley of Dalry who killed a judge in the streets of Edinburgh one Sunday morning in 1689 for deciding a lawsuit against him?

With nothing but tavern tales to go on, Lady Grange's friends felt themselves powerless to proceed against her husband. He was a judge of the Court of Session and had powerful influence with the government. Even if they had enough evidence to expose him as a Jacobite, it would avail them nothing. There were so many other secret sympathizers holding high places in the administration who could protect him. If Lady Grange were not dead, there was nothing her friends could do until she got word to them of the whereabouts of her prison. It was ten years before that word came—from the lonely island of St. Kilda far beyond the Outer Hebrides.

The letter reached the mainland concealed in a hank of yarn. It was the first Lady Grange had written since she was brought to the island from her prison on the mainland eight years before. On her arrival Macleod, the Lord of the Isles, had ordered the crofters to shun her as they would the Evil One. They must tell her nothing—not even the island's name. And the folk feared their laird too much to disobey him.

There was one man only dared to speak kindly to Lady Grange—Roderick Maclennon, the wandering preacher who settled in the island in 1735. He had wept when he had heard her pitiful story but even he dared not tell her where she was.

Early in 1742 Lady Grange found out. She had borrowed a bible from Maclennon and in turning the pages she came across an old letter addressed to the preacher. It took another two months to get writing

LADY GRANGE was hoisted behind a huge ruffian named Sawney Frazer and their bodies bound tightly together

FEARFULLY she descended spiral after spiral, passing passageway after passageway

materials and to persuade Maclennon's daughter to carry her message to the mainland. When the girl returned, it was with word that the letter had reached Edinburgh and that her friends were striving to send a ship to her rescue.

Lady Grange wept when she heard the news. Would anybody in Edinburgh recognize in this old woman wizened prematurely by suffering the beautiful lady in her middle forties who had disappeared ten years before?

Her ordeal alone makes one of the strangest documents that has come out of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745; but Lady Grange's version of her husband's motives, if true, transforms it into a tale of revenge which smacks more of the Dark Ages than of the Age of Reason.

ON the night she was kidnapped Lady Grange had been writing letters in her lodgings near the castle. About midnight there came a loud knocking at the street door. She heard her name shouted and the sound of heavy footsteps. Men armed with pistols and dirks came crowding into her room.

Tremblingly she asked their mission and their leader, Macdonald of Morar, handed her a letter from her husband. It ordered her to accompany these gentlemen to new quarters.

On her knees she begged Macdonald to believe she had never intended contacting King George's agents. She loved her husband. All she had done was to beg him to abandon the Jacobites for his own safety.

But the men seized her, gagged the sobs into her throat and carried her down to a waiting sedan chair. Macdonald led the way on horseback, the hooves of the horse clattering over the cobblestones of the silent streets to an open field in the new town.

Here they were met by a party of horsemen under the Laird Macleod. Lady Grange was hoisted behind a huge ruffian named Sawney Frazer and their bodies were bound tightly together.

By a curious irony they were near the garden of her childhood home. And her last view of Edinburgh was the moonlit summerhouse where her strange marriage to Lord Grange had taken place. This kidnapping was the grisly sequel of that marriage. Lovely lady had never stooped to folly with such dire results.

IN 1701 Lady Grange was Rachel Chiesley, a cherry-ripe beauty of seventeen and her husband was James Erskine, a law student, the most handsome and dashing young rake in the university. He wooed her tempestuously and when he promised her marriage, she yielded. The night following he was boasting of his victory among his bottle companions.

His talk came back to her. And as week followed week without his making any attempt to see her, something within her died. But her independent spirit came to the aid of her grief. When at last she sent to Erskine begging him to meet her in the summerhouse, she was not swallowing her pride. Erskine had he but known it was walking into a trap.

He came insolently confident, expecting another night of love. The more angry his mistress felt at his absence, the greater the pleasure of reconciliation would be. But Rachel was no longer the yielding innocent. Sadly she asked him when he would keep his pledge to marry her. Venomously came the answer of the disappointed man: "When you can come a virgin to my bed."

Instead of cringing before his taunt, the girl turned and called softly into the darkness. In a moment they were surrounded by masked men—the kinsmen Rachel was holding in readiness.

Grimly she told Erskine to prepare to die, and powerless before a dozen naked dirks, he fell in terror before her. But fear sharpened his craftiness and he pleaded eloquently. He deserved death at her hands—he admitted it. But for the sake of his immortal soul would she not send

for a priest that he might make retribution by marrying her before he died?

It was a master-stroke. Her love for him flowed fresh within her. The priest was sent for and they were married in the light of the torches. She forgot her intention to kill him; but he, as he pressed her to him in the kiss of peace, swore to take a terrible revenge.

HE had waited a long time. Down the years it amused him to lull Rachel into believing all was forgotten; that he loved her with something of the adoration she had for him. But time was only sharpening his hatred. He could not move openly against her because a brilliant career had given him a peerage and a seat on the bench. But it was her pride in that career that at last gave him his opportunity.

Lord Grange became a Jacobite and his Edinburgh home at the foot of Niddry's Wynd became the secret meeting place of the Stuart cabal. Lady Grange feared he was risking needlessly all he had won, and begged him to abandon the cause.

A brilliant idea came to him. He had only to distort her fears of his Jacobite activities into Hanoverian sympathies and all Stuart Scotland would work his revenge for him. He did not want her to die. Death was too swift a repayment for his patience. She should suffer until she longed to die and it should be withheld as a final refinement of cruelty.

One night in February, 1732, Lord Grange stood before the cabal as one weighed down by grief. Heavily he told them of his wife's threats to denounce them to the King's agents. Lord Lovat of Frazer and Macdonald and Macleod wished to do away with her but Lord Grange pleaded for her life with such eloquence that he carried the meeting with him.

EVENTS followed quickly. Numbed by her husband's treachery Lady Grange was driven into lodgings in the house of a trusted Jacobite near the castle. In April Macdonald came to carry her away.

After a journey into the Highlands which was punctuated with long periods of solitary confinement in the houses of different clansmen, Macdonald and Macleod with their rough henchman, Sawney Frazer, carried Lady Grange to Castle Tirum—a grim fortress on a headland overlooking the Atlantic on the borders of Inverness and Argyll.

She was taken to the topmost chamber in the west tower and a smile of satisfaction creased the apeish features of Sawney Frazer as he flung Lady Grange into a chair. "Thank God we have you safe at last, thou child of the Devil!" he said. "Now see if thy satanical father can release thee."

Three narrow lancet windows allowed her to follow the sun from its rising in the mountains to its setting in the sea. The door opened into Sawney Frazer's apartment and beyond this was the one stone stairway leading down to the body of the castle. Her position was hopeless.

Yet she awoke one morning to find a note on her bedside table. "Lady," it said. "If your heart pants for liberty, examine the panel next in line with the top panel of the door."

With wildly beating heart she pressed upon the panel, and to her delight a small aperture appeared. The walls at this point were hollow and enclosed a secret stairway. On the ledge another note introduced her mysterious friend. He was Captain Roche, an Irish sailor, held in Castle Tirum for trying to carry off the daughter of a neighbouring chieftain to the man she loved. Though a prisoner he was allowed to wander about the castle and had discovered many secret passages.

He had got word to his friends in Ireland and his ship would come in close to the shore that night. A light would be left on the ledge at midnight and if Lady Grange took the turning off the stairway which he would mark with an arrow in charcoal, it would lead her out on to the beach. She would find him with the ship's long boat waiting her.

When midnight came, Lady Grange opened the aperture and there was the light. Fearfully she descended spiral after

ONE day her patience was rewarded. A fine ship was bearing down upon St. Kilda before a fresh breeze

spiral and passed passageway after passageway. Then a sudden gust of air blew out her candle. She was discovered unconscious next day by Sawney Frazer. In the panic that darkness brought she had wandered down into the dungeons.

Macdonald and Macleod were badly frightened. The Irishman had escaped and he would surely carry word of Lady Grange's whereabouts to her friends. Lady Grange must be moved.

A LITTLE ship took her to the lonely island of St. Kilda. And here her bitterest sufferings began. She was lodged in the croft of a depraved old mosstrooper who forbade even the children to speak to her.

Her bed was moss, her food, porridge and water. When the wild weather and the rough life tore her clothes, there was nothing to replace them. The only companions her enemies allowed her were the wind and wheeling sea birds and when she sought the comfort of religion, the island priest—before the coming of Maclennon—would insult her and call her "child of Beelzebub." For eight of the ten years that had passed since she left Edinburgh she had been on this island. But her sufferings could not last much longer for thanks to the letter that Maclennon's daughter had carried to the mainland a ship was coming to rescue her.

Every day she spent hours searching the grey seas. And one day her patience was rewarded. A fine ship was bearing down upon St. Kilda before a fresh breeze.

But it was only her enemies—the Jacobites. They had got wind of her letter and had come to move her again—this time to Skye.

The disappointment was too much for Lady Grange. Before the end of the voyage she ceased to be a danger to them. Her mind gave way. And so it was the Jacobites gave her her freedom. They turned her loose upon the island to sleep in a cave and to beg her food from the scattered crofts.

Thus she lived the last years of her life. The Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 came and was crushed. Her persecutors were butchered or taken prisoner in the carnage of Culloden—all except her husband. But this meant nothing to Lady Grange now. She had always maintained that her husband would betray the Jacobites when he had finished using them as the instruments of his vengeance. And whatever the facts of his conversion Lord Grange was certainly living in London as a staunch Whig when his wife died in 1749 in her sixty-fifth year.

END

SHE was lodged in the croft of an old mosstrooper who forbade even the children to speak to her

Eyesight Extraordinary

By JOHN FLEETWOOD

CATS, they say, have nine lives. A zoological professor, wishing to ascertain if the basis of this tradition lay in the fact that a cat, falling from a height, found its feet by instinct, or, alternatively, that it relied on its eyes, dropped one from varying altitudes. Invariably it found its feet. He then substituted a blind cat; and from a few feet only, the animal every time flopped on its back. Thenceforward a group of zoologists turned their energies full-blast to a study of animal vision. Perhaps the accepted theories were wrong. It was found that most of them were.

In the course of the experiments the comparative visions of man and the animals were also studied, and an age-old belief was exploded. Experts made the astonishing discovery that even a man with slightly sub-normal eyesight can see better than most of the sharpest-eyed members of the creature world. Previously it had been thought that the eye of the eagle far surpassed human vision.

Cats, always believed to be keen-sighted, were discovered to see best at a few feet only; after that their vision blurred. Night-time dilation of the pupils of feline eyes enabled them to see more clearly in the dark, though very little farther. An average dog cannot recognise objects across a wide road, nor a cow across its field, though there are, of course, individual canine breeds with an inherited vision which can be trained to recognise a sheep or a falling bird at distances up to 400 or 500 yards in good conditions.

Tests have extended to wild beasts, and these experiments proved even more interesting. Tigers, believed to have the best eyes of all jungle animals, were actually found to be blind to objects more than 100 yards away. At such distances they seemed to rely on a combination of keen down-wind scent and an acute hearing.

SWITCHING from jungle to mountain, the researchers concentrated for a while on a patient who, among four-footers, must surely have first-class eyesight—the mountain goat. What they learned came as something of a shock. Although the chamois needs fair vision to leap so sure-footedly from crag to crag; after that, its eyes cease to be more than ordinarily important to it.

Even to the antelope family, quality of vision proved to be secondary to keen smell and hearing. By far the best-sighted subjects of all were found to be not quadrupeds at all, but the ape and the monkey. This was proved beyond doubt by what the zoo men judged to be the supreme and acid test. One monkey after another was given an opportunity to pick out, or leave unnoticed, a ship sailing across the horizon.

They all spotted the vessel. The only animal who competed on anything like equal terms with the candidates was man himself, who, it was claimed, could discern the ship more quickly and more clearly because he contemplates a distant object with his brain as well as his eye.

It is inevitable, at about this point, the sceptic will ask: "But how about the birds?" Certainly the eyes of the hawk and the eagle are proverbial. Yet they do not surpass man's. Nor, equally surprisingly, do those of the vulture. Often, in India, the (*Continued on page 74*)

A fabulous vista at Levens Hall, Kendal, created from geometric shapes of living green leaf. Below, an open design which, although less to the modern taste, is a tour de force *of the topiarist's art.*

LIVING SCULPTURE

The exigencies of modern gardening have brought topiary back into fashion.

THE art and science of clipping growing trees so that they take the form of men, animals, birds and geometrical shapes is returning to fashion. There is not likely to be a revival of the extravagances of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, satirised in the *Spectator* of 1713 by a man who " dignified his country seat with a Coronation dinner in greens, where you see the champion flourishing at one end of the table on horseback and the Queen in perpetual youth at the other!" No doubt even such an extravagance in topiary, or verdant sculpture as the Victorians called it, would be a great attraction in Coronation year, but it would take at least ten years and more, probably fifty, to grow. The time element apart, few people to-day can afford to spend the tens of thousands of pounds lavished on their topiary gardens by some noblemen three centuries ago, content that the return on their investment should be the pleasure of their grandsons fifty years later, when the gardens matured.

Many of the finest examples of topiary in Britain date from this time, for in the eighteenth century there was a strong reaction against " artificiality " in the garden and few notable topiary gardens have been planted since. Levens Hall, near Kendal, in Westmorland, has long been unique for the number and astonishing variety of its clipped trees, but most of the older famous gardens have examples of the topiarist's art. Peacocks and pheasants in box and yew ornament part of the Sandringham gardens. A peacock and a boar's head were trained and clipped at Haddon Hall to immortalise the story of Dorothy Vernon and her sweetheart. At Crathes Castle, now part of the National Trust, there are wonderfully-shaped trees and hedges which give no impression of eccentricity. Packwood House, Warwickshire, also a National Trust garden, has some beautiful topiary representing the Sermon on the Mount, and even Hidcote Manor, near Broadway, (*Continued on page* 74)

BY ALEXANDER DILKE

Teddy bears have an element of the macabre divorced from their nursery setting.

The great yew hedges that have grown to slow maturity at Glaslough Castle, Co. Monaghan.

THE two Chilean girls were thrilled with the prospect of dancing with what they called boys in skirts. The invitation to Tullaballoch was a long-standing one. It dated back twelve years to the time when Sir Alisdair had been at the Embassy in Santiago. All Lucha and Pepita had to do to clinch the deal was to grow up; and they had done that very attractively.

Sir Alisdair was the head of the Clan Macfane. His house was at the side of a gurgling salmon river and was built of the usual grey stone. Curiously enough, it wasn't called a castle, although it had two turrets and the walls were three feet thick. Inside, it was a maze of staircases; but the rooms were spacious and mainly panelled with white pine. Outside, the country was lovely, birch and bracken, pine and heather; but Lucha thought poorly of the Grampians as mountains after the majesty of the Cordillera.

OWING to shipping delays Lucha and Pepita only arrived three days before the dance which Sir Alisdair was giving at Tullaballoch to launch them on the neighbourhood. There was nothing languid about the dances up there. They consisted of Reels (eightsomes and foursomes), Broun's Reel, Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, Dashing White Sergeant, Petronella and Strip the Willow. The Chilean girls could hardly be expected to compete with this without some instruction, so a rehearsal was arranged the day before the dance to put them through their paces.

Sir Alisdair was a widower in the early sixties, grey-haired and slim. In spite of that, in many ways he was both younger and gayer than either Rob or Fane, his two sons. As proof of his gaiety he had been passionately in love with both Lucha's mother and Pepita's mother at the same time, and that was the origin of the long-standing invitation to Scotland.

Sir Alisdair was thinking wistfully of those two beautiful women as he watched the rehearsal. He knew that all South Americans had dancing bred in their bones and he had no fears as to the result. That was how it turned out. It only took the girls ten minutes to learn the basic steps, and they soon improved on them with some graceful variations of their own. But what amused Sir Alisdair was that the rehearsal which had begun with the instruction of the Chilean girls in the Scottish dances ended even more enthusiastically in the instruction of the local young men in the samba and the conga.

Lucha and Pepita first met the kilts at the dance rehearsal; and even though they were very ordinary day-kilts, worn with tweed jackets, they were both much interested. Lucha in particular wanted to know why there was that large safety-pin in front on the right-hand side, what the sporran was for and what it contained, and whether it was a real knife in the little sheath on the outside of the right stocking. She would also have liked to know what the gentlemen wore underneath; but thought that it would be indelicate to ask.

In the meantime, there were other peculiarities to take their minds off the kilts. Porridge and dried haddock for breakfast; oatcakes and jam at lunch; and a haggis for dinner. That, with the bagpipes that accompanied it, made her think of the more excruciating forms of Chinese torture. And then there was the weather. Brilliant sun while one stayed in the house and then lashing squalls of rain the moment one went outside. But what interested her most was the strange way in which the men kept disappearing. In between meals Tullaballoch might have been a nunnery. All the men were miles away, either with rods or guns.

THE dance was held in the great dining-hall. It was a fine, raftered room and one of the earlier Kings of Scotland had been murdered there in the year 1383. In the afternoon, while the men were out with their rods and guns, Lucha had read quite a lot of Scottish history. She noted that nearly everyone was murdered in the end—and generally after dinner.

However, she soon forgot about that when the dinner-party began. There wasn't a tail-coat or a white waistcoat amongst them. Every one of the twelve men wore a kilt, and every kilt seemed to be of a different tartan. The greens and reds and greys and yellows made Lucha's scarlet dress seem a little insipid. But the kilts were nothing to the jackets that were worn with them. These were as gaudy as a popinjay. Blue velvet and purple velvet; brass, silver, round, and square buttons; lace cuffs, jabots, ruffs and ruffles. Lucha had never felt so out-coloured and out-dressed in her life.

At dinner all the legs naturally were hidden under the table. It wasn't till after dinner, when they were waiting in the dance hall for the outside guests, that Lucha noticed that every stockinged pair of legs had its sheathed dagger thrust in at the outside on the right. This surprised her quite a lot. She had thought the daggers were there for some

Short Story

By

LAURENCE KIRK

Illustrations

By

LANCE CATTERMOLE

active purpose. In the daytime they might have been useful for several things. But at night! At a dance! Lucha couldn't help thinking of the blood-strewn pages of history she had been reading in the afternoon.

However, there was no time to dwell on that. Introductions were being made and her programme was filling up. Macfarlanes, Macfanes, Macdonalds, McLeans. The names were too much for her and she sorted them out by the colour of their tartans. Then the jingle-jangle of the Petronella began and the dance was on.

SIR ALISDAIR had taken the opportunity which the dance had given him to invite everyone to whom he owed hospitality. Everybody of importance was there, including the Sheriff and the Chief Constable; and as it was a grand Highland occasion the more mature ladies wore their tiaras, while the younger ones had a tartan sash over their dresses from the left shoulder to the right hip.

Both Lucha and Pepita made a few mistakes at the beginning, but their partners put them right, and they soon got into the swing of it. Lucha had decided quite early in the proceedings that she would like to be taken into supper either by Rob Macfane or Kenneth Macduff. The former was down on her programme as "Grey eyes. Green tartan. Silver buckles," and the latter as "Blue eyes. Jabot. Best legs in the room." In the meantime, as she waited hopefully for the invitation, she kept an eye on Pepita to see that she was doing all right, and observed every detail of the brilliant scene around her. She was accustomed to the women outshining the men on all big occasions. But here it was quite different. It was a gay peacock world and the peahens couldn't compete even with their sashes and tiaras. And, of course, it was the men that one noticed as dancers. With their stockinged legs one could see every nimble movement as they hopped and jumped on their pointed toes.

It was because she was so interested that Lucha noticed something which no one else observed. No. 9 on the programme was an eightsome, and Rob Macfane was in the set next to hers. He was the best dancer on the floor, and it was while she was watching his steps that she saw that the dagger was missing from its sheath in his stocking. She had no opportunity to tell him until dance No. 11 had finished, and then just as she was going to tell him she looked down and saw that the dagger was back in its sheath, and that it had the thistle-shaped cairngorm on the hilt which she had noticed earlier in the evening.

SHE would have asked him about it if there had been time, but at that moment Kenneth Macduff seized her arm and took her forcibly in to supper. She enjoyed the supper, although Kenneth insisted on talking to her in execrable Spanish. There was a pause afterwards before the dancing began again, and she and Kenneth were sitting on the stairs smoking cigarettes. She then asked what she had wanted to ask all the evening, namely, why they all wore daggers in their stockings.

"It 's just a part of the dress," he informed her.

"And why do you call it that funny name you do call it?"

"Skean-dhu?"

"Yes."

"It means black knife."

"But why black?"

"Well, it wasn't always purely ornamental, you know."

Lucha thought that over for a moment.

"Could I see it?" she then asked.

"Certainly." He pulled the sheath and dagger from his stocking and put it on her palm.

Lucha looked at it and then gave a tug to pull the dagger out.

"It doesn't come out very easily, does it?"

"They vary," he said.

Lucha gave a second firmer tug and there was the dagger in her small, soft hands. It was nearly 3 ins. long, with a strong blade tapering backwards to a point. Lucha incautiously felt the point with the fleshy underpart of her thumb and immediately a round red blob appeared on the skin.

"I say! Have a care!" Kenneth protested.

"I thought you said it was ornamental!"

"Only in use. Not in design. Look! Here 's a handkerchief."

But the handkerchief wasn't enough. As soon as Lucha wiped the blob away it reappeared as big as ever. She decided then to run up to her room to put some "new skin" or plaster on it before the dancing began again.

Three minutes later Pepita saw a very wide-eyed Lucha beckoning to her from a doorway.

Pepita excused herself from her partner and went up to Lucha quickly.

"What 's the matter, Lucha dear? (*Continued on page* 64.)

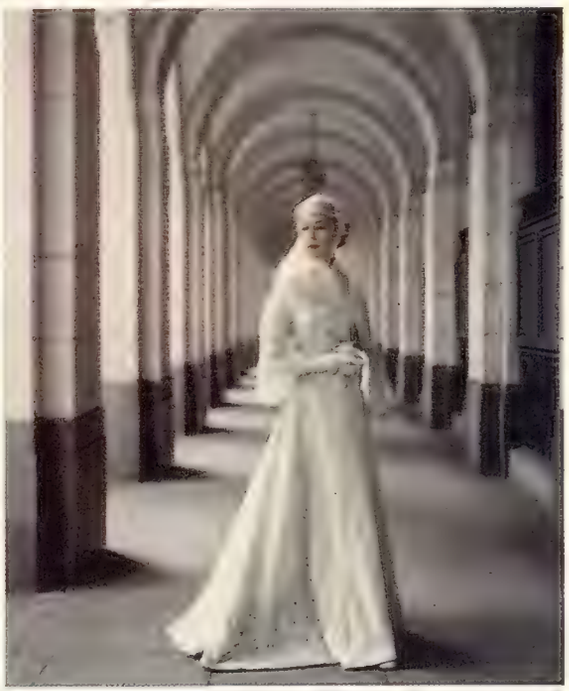
Amid the tartan and velvet, the lace and ruffles, Lucha had never felt so outdressed in her life.

It was while Lucha was sitting out with Kenneth Macduff that she asked why the men wore daggers in their stockings.

Lance Cattermole

Glamorous

Patou's lovely evening coat of fine wool prodigiously full, enhanced with a white shoulder-wide collar



Wool gaberdine of the lightest texture for a bride. By the Italian designer Carosa

Gossamer fine worsted embroidered with soapbubble sequins. Norman Hartnell. Wool jersey, *left*, scintillating with gold bead and diamanté embroidery. By Sanlorenzo

Wool

THE story of wool is that of the ugly duckling who grew up to be the beauty of the brood. The homely fabric that once merely kept us warm has become the luxurious medium for scintillating evening gowns and day clothes with aesthetic qualities once claimed only for the finer silks. The world's great couturiers are using wool for their most splendid creations because of its malleability, its superb draping qualities, its texture—flattering to all ages of woman—and, not least, its affinity to dyeing. It achieves subtler gradations of colour than other fabrics, and to all these virtues it adds another—it is warm!

(*Top*) Peony-coloured superfine worsted for a crinoline cocktail gown with black guipure lace by Victor Stiebel. (*Above*) Pink-beige wool crêpe for Worth's ballet-length evening dress encrusted with semi-precious stones and sequins. (*Right*) A pastel blue velour housecoat with cerise velveteen cuffs and collar by C. Myers

The Heart of the Berwyns

By Christopher Trent

THE Berwyn Mountains are like a wedge set on a broad base which stretches from Lake Bala to Lake Vyrnwy and tapering towards the Vale of Dee at Llangollen. Of every hundred visitors who come to explore North Wales by car or on foot only two or three know anything of this incomparable countryside of open moorland and secluded valley.

A hundred years ago George Borrow knew it well; much of the time in which he explored Wild Wales was spent at Llangollen. Ruskin praised it, too; so did other Victorian travellers. To-day, though Llangollen is still thronged in summer, the paths and tracks and little roads across the Berwyns are deserted. Visitors, whether they come by road or railway, are funnelled through the narrow gap of the Dee and rushed on to the west.

That is a clue to the isolation of the Berwyns in this age of travel. In Victorian times Llangollen and the Vale of Dee were still Wild Wales to most English people. Many were content to spend their holidays on this threshold of unknown country. When the motor-car and motor-coach brought a new attitude to travel they were carried swiftly to a more distant goal, past Llangollen and on to the mountain massif of Snowdon on the western horizon.

So to-day there are four hundred square miles of countryside which have scarcely changed since last century. Welsh is still the common language of the people who dwell in it. They, unlike their fellow countrymen in the villages near Snowdon, do not look to the visitor to eke out their livelihood. They live on and for the land; the great event in their calendar is the rounding up of the flocks at sheep-dipping time in the summer. Bands of shepherds, some mounted on horseback, all accompanied by their sheepdogs, range the hillsides, driving before them an ever-increasing number of sheep towards the tracks which lead to the dipping stations. It is an inspiring sight—and a tumultuous din, too, as the bleating of the sheep mingles with the traditional Celtic cries of the shepherds.

The sheep on Snowdon are scarcely distinguishable at a distance from the rocks strewn over the hillside

THIS corner of unknown Britain is bounded on the north and west by the high road which follows the Vale of Dee through Corwen to Bala—a road which has real beauty but does no sort of justice to the mountain country. It does not possess a single other main road. Though it deserves to be explored on foot, for those who cannot do so it contains many miles of little roads and lanes linking village with village and promising safe but adventurous journeys for the motorist with a good map and a bump of locality.

One of the most attractive rides is up the valley of the Ceiriog from Chirk to Llanarmon and thence by winding mountain lane to Pen-y-Bont Fawr. From Pen-y-Bont there are roads which pass through some of the loneliest of the Berwyn country, one crossing the moorlands to Bala, another traversing densely wooded landscapes to Vyrnwy.

LAKE Vyrnwy itself is an elegant jewel in a fine setting which proves the paradox that man's artifice can sometimes improve on nature. Before Lake Vyrnwy was filled to supply water for the people of Liverpool it was a grey, level, boggy wilderness, as nearly dreary a spot, according to contemporary travellers, as any in Wales. Now on a fine day the brilliant blue of the waters reflects the brilliance of the sky and, sparkling in the sunlight, takes all the greyness from the surrounding slopes. The hills themselves have changed from desolate moorlands to dense forests of conifers planted about the same time that the reservoir was constructed, in order, so the local people say, to increase still further the amount of rain which falls on this very wet part of the world.

Llangynog, five miles across the hills from Vyrnwy, was once one of the richest settlements of the Berwyns. There were slate quarries which rivalled those of Bethesda and lead mines which yielded the finest metal. It was a prosperous community which became the railhead of the line which winds up into the hills from the Vale of Severn. Competition at home and

Trim, stone-built and gaily whitewashed, a typical farmstead of the Berwyn valleys

Llansantffraid turns out to watch a local football Derby played on a sloping field

A pastoral valley in the heart of the Berwyn country

overseas and different economic circumstances have changed all that. To-day no lead is mined and no slate quarried, but there is still employment for some of the descendants of the old-time miners in the granite quarries.

Llangynog stands out in the visitor's memory chiefly as the gateway to a domain of great natural beauty that centres on the Afon Eiarth, a twisting valley hemmed in by rocky precipices, a long finger that points into the very heart of the mountains. A narrow road winds along its side and leads ultimately over mile after mile of rock-studded moorland to the steep western-facing slope that unfolds a far-flung view across the Vale of Edeyrnion. Here the stern peaks of Snowdonia form the backcloth to a scene which nature seems to have designed with minute attention to detail and a wonderful appreciation of the value of contrasting masses and colours. No other view in all Wales surpasses this.

The villages of the Berwyns are mostly tiny hamlets with perhaps one fair-sized farm and a dozen cottages. All are in the valleys; many straddle the little rivers which rise among the moors and flow gently eastward towards England or more swiftly westward towards the Dee. For centuries every farmhouse was a factory as well; the sheep which ranged over the nearby mountains provided the raw material for the farmhouse mills which were powered by the water of the streams. Many of the farmhouses still have their old mills, now converted into barns or sheds, but the (*Continued on page* 60)

Lake Vyrnwy, the artificially constructed lake which supplies Liverpool with its water. The Berwyn Mountains seen in the background surround the lake

The road from Bala over the desolate moorlands is one of the loneliest in the Berwyn country—a countryside which has scarcely altered since the last century

This unexplored corner of Wales, wild and isolated even in these days of travel, lies on the borders of Montgomeryshire and Merionethshire

Books:

Reviewed by Trevor Allen

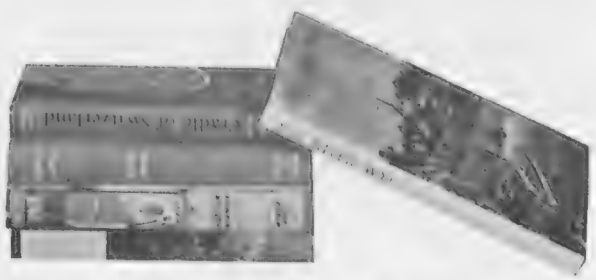
I DON'T know if you read Ernest Raymond's *In The Steps Of The Brontës*. If so, you will want to read his episodic study of Keats and Shelley—"**Two Gentlemen Of Rome**" (Cassell, 18s.)—for, without fictionizing, he brings to it the narrative power of a novelist. It is addressed mainly to "young people, and those less than young, who have yet to discover the full glory of Keats and Shelley; and my aim has been to bring them to this excitement by quickening in them a love of these two immortal lads and a high interest in the drama of their lives." A worthy motive admirably achieved in what is to me the best type of popular literary biography, well produced and illustrated.

WHEN Winifred Peck went to Wycombe Abbey School, newly founded on boys' public school model, the scholars were told: "you are not, of course, allowed to eat butter and jam *together* with your bread as some of you did at supper to-night." She went on to Oxford in the days when "we still had to take a chaperon for so dangerous a festivity as tea with a brother." Lady Peck's account of a Victorian childhood, "**A Little Learning**" (Faber, 12s. 6d.) accordingly has nostalgic charm besides much wise reflection on Victorian education.

Choice Of The Month

LOVELY PLACES

TOPOGRAPHICAL books are booming; 500 were published last year, more than two and a half times the total in any pre-1939 year. Five recent ones are characterized by good writing, excellent illustrations. Edward Hutton's "**Florence**" (Hollis & Carter, 21s.) is a new rendering by a master of his subject. Arnold Lunn's "**The Cradle Of Switzerland**" (Hollis & Carter, 12s. 6d.) is both tourist and historical. Churton Fairman's "**Another Spain**" (Museum Press, 18s.) explores off the tourist track. J. Allan Cash's "**The River Wye**" (Chapman & Hall, 25s.) has seventy-two magnificent quarto gravure photographs. Wilson MacArthur's "**The River Conway**" (Cassell, 12s. 6d.) records a journey on foot from source to mouth.



IT is part of the fascination of reading that one can turn from this chronicle of small, intimate things to Eleanor Bor's adventures in Assam and Tibet as wife of a Forestry and Political Officer. They had to fight rhinoceros poaching and innumerable jungle pests; they studied the customs of little-known tribes such as the Daflas and Akas, were ceremonially received by the Seven Kings of Rupa. "**Adventures Of A Botanist's Wife**" (Hurst & Blackett, 18s.) were right off the beaten track all the way.

AS *Daily Mirror* roving correspondent David Walker's assignments took him to France, Germany, Jugoslavia, the Persian Gulf, Korea, and Egypt for the Cairo riots. "**I Go Where I'm Sent**" (Chapman & Hall, 15s.) has not only first-rate on-the-spot stories but slants on an ace-journalist's job. In West Berlin he found some ingenious dodges to get information through the Iron Curtain and warn Eastern Zone petty tyrants that their "secret" misdeeds were being duly recorded!

CREOLE FERDINAND MORTON was presumably the first and most influential composer of jazz, which took shape in New Orleans around 1900. In 1938, when he was playing in an obscure Washington night-spot and hadn't a dime, Alan Lomax sat him at a piano and mike in the Library of Congress and got him to talk and play his tough, honky-tonk life story. "**Mister Jelly Roll**" (Cassell, 18s.) is an edited transcript of it, with Mr. Lomax's commentary. Included free, but 2s. 6d. separate, is a complete Jelly Roll Discography by Thomas Cusack. Jazz fans can "go to town" on this lot, which has David Stone Martin's tremendously vital drawings.

"I AM paralysed the moment I try to write something I do not regard as true," says iconoclast Wyndham Lewis. Unfortunately many have to to-day where truth subserves propaganda and free speech is taboo. "**The Writer And The Absolute**" (Methuen, 21s.) is an earnest philosophical inquiry into an evil which now makes writing ethically, spiritually "dangerous."

TWO body-aid books: Mrs. C. F. Leyel's "**Green Medicine**" (Faber, 31s. 6d.) describing herbs containing precious chlorophyll and their value for all human organs; Dr. George Somerville's "**Family Medical Encyclopaedia**" (Collins, 21s.), 694 pages embracing the latest knowledge, treatments. (*Continued on page 58*)

A Fur Coat For Christmas

BY BERTA RUCK

EVE had no clothes; practically none.

Every woman knows what that means.

Furthermore, her Frank was expected on Christmas leave from overseas.

Every girl would sympathize. "If only I had a fur coat—any old wisp looks good under decent furs," sighed Eve. "I see no hope——"

She then saw that newspaper advertisement.

FOR SALE.—Tall Lady's Wardrobe. Model Evening-Gowns As New. Several Pairs Shoes Scarcely Worn. Fur Coats. Write Box 0003.

The operative word was *Tall*. Bargains are to be picked up by the pocket-Venus, whereas Eve, though she'd a graceful enough figure, was an outsize height.

She wrote to that tall lady's box-address. "Shoes" might be a good buy, she told herself. Frank always notices a girl's feet.

In her heart Eve knew it was not "*shoes*" that allured her but "*fur coats.*"

Always she had coveted, never had she possessed one. Why hadn't Godmother bought a fur coat in the old days when such were to be had for twenty guineas? Why hadn't she "laid it down," like wine for when Eve, then a child, should be twenty-one?

Instead of that, she had lately left her godchild a legacy of forty pounds.

Eve, who should have banked it, felt richer for changing the cheque, into notes, which she carried about with her "in case."

EVE looked in the mirror. The coat fell, shapely as a poet's line, from her chin to just the right point on her calf. Soft fur lifted in a sigh from her heart. "I wish I could buy it"

Some of the precious hoard would go on Christmas presents. A furrier had told Eve, who was "thinking about" fur gloves for her Frank, that it was most unlikely good skins would ever again be seen at the price she was mentioning.

Now that legacy began to burn

AS if by magic there had sprung up behind them, out of the very pavement, two men. They placed themselves on either side of the scared youngster, and the plain-clothes man asked Eve her name, address, occupation

a hole in her wallet. What about blueing two pounds on shoes in which to go dancing with Frank at Christmas?

Her letter to the box-address was answered by an appointment to view at a West End block of flats.

THE hall porter asked if she had "an appointment?—Top flat."

Eve tapped at the green door at the top. It was quickly opened by the tall lady. . . . Simple, expensive black with a small pearl string. A waft of French scent. Quietly perfect hat over latest hair-do. Face a trifle hard; voice unexpectedly soft.

"You wrote about shoes? Ah yes. Just in time. Do come in."

She showed Eve into a bed-sitter; big, light, with signs of dismantling.

Wardrobe doors gaped open, showing wrapping-bags that hung like Bluebeard's wives. A painted waste-paper basket lay on its side and disgorged empty cigarette cartons, cosmetic containers, torn-up envelopes. Drawers of the writing-desk were pulled out. A tray with syphon, bottle and half empty glass stood on the telephone-book. The divan bed, on four big gilded claws, was stripped to the mattress and on it lay two suitcases and a last-minute bag.

"Excuse chaos. Packing," murmured the lady. "Now! Shoes."

She slid a hand into the wardrobe under the bags, drew out footwear. "Moykop's; hand-made. Try them on."

EVE, a Cinderella who took six-and-a-half, tried them on, they fitted to perfection and looked sizes smaller than they were.

"Eight and ten guineas those cost me. . . . I will let you have those two last pairs for fifteen shillings each."

Eve, without thought of that phrase, A sprat to catch a whale, promptly fished that wallet out of her brassière, took, from the sheaf of notes, a pound note, a ten shilling note, handed them over.

"Keep those shoes on," advised the soft voice from the hard lips. "Slip your brogues into your case. You'll need high heels for trying the other things."

Eve, with her candid, rueful smile, said, "Sorry I can't run to anything else."

"Pity. But see what they look like."

Eve hesitated; with the classic result.

"Now. Here's the bargain of my collection!" Was there an odd gleam in the lady's eyes as she took it from the back of the wardrobe, or did Eve imagine, later, that she had noticed that gleam? Stripping off the bag the lady displayed—Ah, that mink coat!

All Eve stirred in response to the Call—dating from the Cave Age when pelts of wild beasts were linked to Life's essentials; shelter, warmth, food the Call of Furs to Woman.

"Try this on. It should

ILLUSTRATED
BY JACK FAULKS

be just your length," urged the soft-voiced lady.

Up to now any garment Eve tried on had been just too short. This long fur coat flattered her proportions, was soft as a caress, warm as a welcome, light as down.

"It feels Heaven, but——"

"Look in the long glass."

Eve looked. The coat fell, shapely as a poet's line, from her chin to just the right point on her calf.

Ah, if Frank could see me turned out like this! Soft fur lifted in a sigh from the heart. "I wish I could buy it."

"I'll look up my list of prices." The tall lady turned to her desk; took up a handbag. "Things went off like hot cakes. Just the shoes, an evening-dress and that fur coat left. The coat cost eight hundred pounds."

Eve sensed relief. It couldn't be less than half-price second-hand? which put it out of the temptation class.

"I'd like to see you walk out in this. You're as tall as I am." Watchful, shrewd dark eyes were on a level with Eve's candid grey gaze. "Such a shame, if this lovely thing went to one of these little Dumpeys, who'd ruin it shortening it. Perfect as it is, on you. Give yourself the coat for a Christmas present! I'd make you a price, as I'm going abroad. . . ." The tall lady seemed to debate within herself. "Sometimes it's fun to allow oneself a spot of extravagance. I tell you what. I'll let the coat go for forty pounds. It's giving it away."

"I know," mourned coveting Eve. "Only, you see. . . . My whole legacy amounted to forty pounds! And I've bought these shoes and the office only pays me just . . . and I've nothing saved. . . . Thanks *terribly*, but——"

Eve's hands went up to the fastening of the collar.

The lady's gesture stopped her. "Wait. D'you know what I'll do? I'll knock off ten. Thirty pounds for a mink coat. You can only say *done*!"

Eve laughed recklessly. "*Done!*"

Without allowing herself time to reconsider she dragged out that wallet, she handed over three fivers and the rest in pound notes.

"I'll keep on the coat——"

"You're sure to have a wonderful time in it. Goodbye. You'll never regret it."

EVE began to regret it the moment after that door closed behind her.

She went downstairs scolding herself. "Mad——! All that money. All I've got. Gone. . . ."

This was not the first time in her life that impulsive Eve had spent more than she intended.

It was the first time that she had squandered thirty pounds, thirty-one pounds ten, counting the shoes, out of a whole fortune of little over forty.

Wrapped in mink, shod by Moykop, feeling cheaper than any down-and-out, she passed into the foggy street thronged with early Christmas shoppers. She did not see the glance sent after her by the flat's hall porter, or the eyes upon her of a man on the opposite side of the street. She was in the grip of Spendthrift's Remorse.

Could I crawl back and tell the lady I've thought better of it? No. Not the type of woman to let a client go back on her bargain. . . . I'm sunk.

"Taxi, Madam?" (*Continued on page 60*)

A trinity of talent

THREE women writers with different tastes and temperaments, but with the same enviable talent of being able to count the sales of their novels in millions, are waiting (in three different counties) for the appearance of their latest books.

They are Miss Elizabeth Goudge, in Devon; Miss Enid Blyton, in Bucks; and Miss Ruby M. Ayres, in Surrey.

For all of these talented ladies, success is no new thing: their books have brought them fame and money and a host of new friends. Yet it would be hard to find three women whose views, whose way of working, and whose likes and dislikes are more dissimilar!

Miss Goudge, for example, a slight, frail woman in middle life, lives in a cottage aptly named Providence Cottage, on the hills outside Paignton. The cottage is set in the middle of an apple orchard, and in the dim distance the sea glitters bluely in the elbow of the bay.

It is an astonishing fact that although her most famous book—*Green Dolphin Country*—is set largely in New Zealand, she has never in fact set foot in that country nor moved far from her native Britain.

How can she write with such assurance and authority about places she has never seen?

"I study all the books I can," she says. (During the war, indeed, she would take a regular bus trip to the Exeter County Library and there read all she could about life down-under.) Now she uses a small Austin for shopping. She writes slowly, in longhand, measuring each word, preferring to stop her day's work when she has still something more to say than to write herself out completely every day.

She was born the daughter of a divinity don, and her early life was spent in the lovely cathedral cities of Wells and Oxford. Always she wanted to write, but the career chosen for her was teaching.

She would teach a few pupils something of sewing and needle- and basket-work in her father's rooms off Tom Quad in Christ Church, Oxford. Then, in the evenings, she would go up to her own room and write.

Her first effort was a play. No one would stage it, but a publisher suggested kindly that she should try a novel. This she did, and submitted it to him. He returned it with regrets that he could not publish it. Three other publishers did likewise; the fourth bought the book.

The story was based on some anecdotes her mother had told her of her early life in the Channel Islands. And it was to such gentle themes that Miss Goudge clung until, in the war, her father dead and her mother ailing, she wrote what is for a woman an astonishing story.

This was the great *Green Dolphin Country*, which film chief Louis Mayer awarded the £30,000 prize—the largest single literary award since Caxton first pressed print to paper—for the best book of that year (1944). Her agent entered the book without telling her. The first she heard of the contest was that she had won it!

THIS set the signet of glory upon the earlier and the later works of this quiet, greying lady. Her sales spurted up; fame had arrived. Such things did not change her way of life much; she remains genuinely the gentlest of creatures, shy, diffident; the sort of person who in a more gracious age would enjoy a game of croquet with the vicar. Yet still a person who in this harder, crueller age, has put herself firmly in the literary limelight.

From Miss Goudge, the shy and gentle, to Miss Blyton, the energetic and astonishing. She has a fantastic output of books: more than 300 children's books of hers have already been published, and by thirty publishers. Her total sales are more than ten million copies.

She supplements this literary prodigality by side-lines. Firms make cakes of soap bearing the images of her children's characters; and there are also jig-saws, card games, writing paper similarly decorated.

In addition, she follows every book and allied production through all the stages from first ideas to finished product. She has consultations with printers, publishers, artists, salesmen. She knows just how far each production has progressed—and whom to question if there are snags.

(*Above*) Ruby M. Ayres, whose romantic novels have reached a sale of nine and a half millions and Enid Blyton (*on left*) whose astonishing output of fiction is matched only by the enthusiasm of her young readers

Elizabeth (*Green Dolphin Country*) Goudge, in the garden of Providence Cottage, her home on the South Devon coast where she lives and works

By Mawnon Smith

Add to all this industry the fact that she refuses to have a secretary to help her and—well, let's hear what she says about all this herself.

". . . I do it all by *method*. I make a note of every appointment and keep to it. It takes some doing, of course, for I have an average daily mail of 100 letters. And I answer them all myself. . . .

"Here's how. Ten, say, are thank-yous. These need no reply. Burn 'em. Maybe another ten are on business. I write my answer on the original letter and post it back at once.

"The rest may be from children. I put them in three piles : some write to tell me about their private worries—their goldfish has died or some such thing. These need a written answer. Children don't like typed notes.

"Others want autographs, or ask when my next book is due. I get through the lot by lunch."

After lunch, she starts work in earnest. She can manage to type 10,000 words a day herself, if she is in the mood; at this rate she can finish a book in a week.

She has fifteen regular series of characters running, each of which needs a new book a year; plus serials, cartoon books, newspaper strips and the like.

She carries around with her in her handbag pictures of herself, and small slips of paper signed Enid Blyton (with the two lines under the B). Children know that the signature is not genuine, she says, unless it has these lines. Children never ask for an autograph in vain.

Miss Blyton, in her forties, is in private life the wife of a surgeon; she gave up her original career as a Froebel teacher to write, has kept on ever since. She has two daughters of her own; one at St. Andrews University, the other at school. She lives in a gracious house at Beaconsfield, drives a green M.G. saloon; her husband, a Bentley.

There have been many attempts to analyse her fantastic success; none of them completely successful. Let us just admit that she is a miracle; and one whom success has not spoiled.

Now for Miss Ayres ("I take on where Enid

(*Continued on page* 58)

CAFFE' UMBERTO

The GOOD NATURED MAN

By Theodora Cooper

Illustrations by Mays

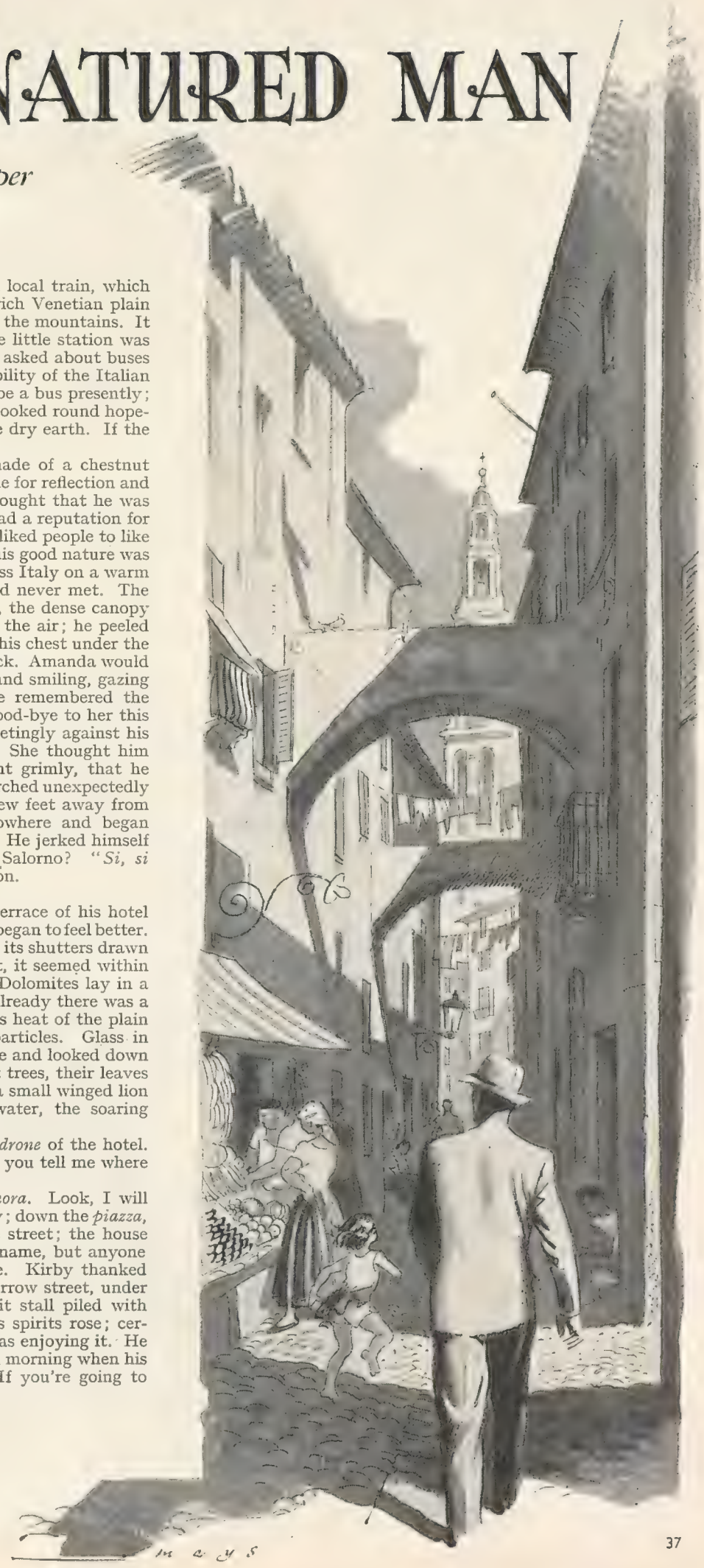
AT Vicenza, Kirby changed into a small local train, which trundled leisurely across the broad, rich Venetian plain and discharged him at the foothills of the mountains. It was mid-day, the hour for sleep; the little station was sun-baked and deserted, the porter whom he asked about buses smiled and gestured with the unfailing amiability of the Italian countryman. Presently, *signor*, there would be a bus presently; perhaps the *signor* would wait? A taxi? He looked round hopefully, as though a taxi might spring from the dry earth. If the *signor* would wait. . . .

Kirby settled himself under the heavy shade of a chestnut tree in the station yard. He had plenty of time for reflection and his reflections were not pleasant ones; he thought that he was making a fool of himself. He knew that he had a reputation for good nature; in a way he was proud of it, he liked people to like him and to ask his help. But it seemed that his good nature was going too far when it drove him halfway across Italy on a warm September day to be kind to someone he had never met. The heat beat up from the white dust at his feet, the dense canopy of leaves above his head seemed to shut out the air; he peeled off his coat and felt the sweat trickling down his chest under the thin shirt. He looked at his watch : two o'clock. Amanda would be lounging on their balcony at Garda, cool and smiling, gazing drowsily across the dancing lake water; he remembered the mocking lift of her eyebrows when he said good-bye to her this morning and the touch of her mouth laid fleetingly against his cheek. "Good-bye, sweet, enjoy yourself." She thought him mad, of course; the trouble was, he thought grimly, that he began to think so too. At this point the bus lurched unexpectedly round the corner and pulled up, roaring, a few feet away from him, and a small crowd appeared from nowhere and began elbowing their way good-humouredly into it. He jerked himself to his feet; Salorno, was this the bus for Salorno? "*Si, si signor, Salorno.*" He joined the fight to get on.

A COUPLE of hours later, sitting on the terrace of his hotel above the *piazza* and sipping an *apéritif*, he began to feel better. The hotel was small, square and pink-washed, its shutters drawn against the afternoon heat; behind it, almost, it seemed within walking distance, the southern peaks of the Dolomites lay in a flat, blue frieze against the paler blue sky. Already there was a mountain freshness in the air, the dry, lifeless heat of the plain seemed broken up into a million dancing particles. Glass in hand, Kirby strolled to the edge of the terrace and looked down on the *piazza*; there was a clump of chestnut trees, their leaves just scorched at the edges, a fountain where a small winged lion perched airily above the gushing jets of water, the soaring campanile of a church.

Kirby drained his glass and sought the *padrone* of the hotel. "I wish to call on the *Signora* Mowbray; can you tell me where to find her?"

"But of course; everyone knows the *Signora*. Look, I will show you. . . ." He gesticulated energetically; down the *piazza*, past the church, then left at the end of the street; the house stood back, on a little side lane. It had no name, but anyone would show him the *Casa* Mowbray, anyone. Kirby thanked him and set out. As he walked down the narrow street, under the arcades of the houses and past the fruit stall piled with grapes and delicious little ripe green figs, his spirits rose; certainly he was wasting his time, but now he was enjoying it. He could recall with amusement the grey London morning when his friend, Charles Holland had said to him, "If you're going to



Whatever private doubts Kirby might have about his mission to Salorno, the town was as picturesque as any in Italy, with its maze of narrow arcaded streets crouched behind the piazza and the ragged peaks of the Dolomites, a blue frieze against the distant sky

Garda, I do wish you'd go over to Salorno and see old Mrs. Mowbray. She's old, she keeps writing to me, and she can't last much longer. She's always writing about her painting, I think she wants someone to talk to about it, and you're such a good-natured chap. . . ."

It was true, everyone seemed to want to direct him to the *Casa* Mowbray; he found it without difficulty, a flat, grey house with a carved stone urn set in a niche above the door and a heavy wrought-iron knocker masking an electric bell. He sounded it; and after a longish pause the door opened a crack and a woman's voice said mysteriously, "*Avanti.*" From the *guichet* inside the servant's calm dark eyes scrutinized him dispassionately.

"The *Signora* expects you? Please follow me." She led him through a shaded hall and left him in a small, cool room, stone-floored, from whose open window he could see an untidy garden and a trellis hung with vines. The room was clearly one that was little used; chairs stood stiffly against the wall, books in undisturbed rows on the shelves. It had the air of an ante-room to an audience chamber.

PRESENTLY the door opened and a curious figure came in; an elderly woman of medium height, narrowly built, with a small, pinched, sallow face. She was dressed like a fashion-plate of fifty years ago, in a tight-fitting white jacket and long black skirt, a small, round white crocheted hat on her head, elaborate gold earrings and a scattering of heavy, old-fashioned brooches. Her head poked forward shortsightedly and she came close up to Kirby; when he felt the touch of her hand, a skinny claw in a glove of fanciful black net, he understood that she was much older than he had at first thought. Her dark, monkey brown eyes searched his timidly.

"Mr. Bryan? How good of you to call. Mrs. Mowbray has told me about you, she is so pleased you are here." She spoke her r's with a throaty roll, but there was something unmistakably English in the rhythm of her voice; he wondered who she might be, and as if she were answering him she said at once:

"I am the *Contessa* Poldoni. Mrs. Mowbray and I . . . such very old friends . . . in a little community like ours. . . ." Her voice trailed off indecisively, but suddenly she settled herself on a high chair beside him and began to talk more briskly; her eyes watched his face closely, he had the sensation of being examined.

"Professor Holland has written about you, Mr. Bryan. He tells us that you are director of an art gallery, a provincial art gallery, I think he said?"

Kirby supplied the name. "About forty miles from London, in the south-west—a good-sized town." A gleam of amusement shot into her eyes, and he realized with embarrassment that he was talking very carefully and slowly, as if to a child or a foreigner; but she only said mildly, "Yes, I know it quite well. And the gallery—dear me, that must be most interesting, most interesting indeed." The big earrings flashed as she turned sharply towards him. "And so you want some of Mrs. Mowbray's paintings for it?"

Kirby was startled; he gave his easy, pleasant laugh.

"Hardly that, *Contessa*. But of course I'll be delighted to see what she's doing. It's remarkable to find an old person still painting, and still keen. It must help to pass the time."

"She is not well enough to paint any longer," she said sadly, and he saw with discomfort that her eyes were full of tears; but before he had time to say something sympathetic her manner changed; she leaned forward, the earrings and the brooches pinned fantastically at her throat and on her wizened chest bobbing and twinkling excitedly. Her voice became shrill, almost passionate.

"It's so dreadful, really quite dreadful, Mr. Bryan. My poor friend, she suffers so with this terrible indigestion, and the doctors, what do they do for her? Nothing I tell you, nothing, nothing, nothing." She beat hope- (*Continued on page* 66)

She leaned back, her nostrils pinched, her eyes dulled by pain. He sprang to his feet

News about stoves which give the answer to inferior domestic coal

FACED with the comfortless fact that domestic coal will be increasingly poor in quality while the better qualities are sent for export, what can be done to overcome the problem of the fire which gives the minimum of heat at such a formidable cost?

Since nothing can be done about the coal, the answer lies in switching to apparatus which can do without it.

Despite the initial outlay one can be sure of the long-term economy and much greater efficiency by replacing the old-type grate or cooking stove by one of the slow combustion types which flourish on a wide range of fuel other than the present poor grade coal with its leavening of slate and stone.

So far as the open, slow-burning sitting-room type of stove is concerned there is a variety of choice.

These grates burn many kinds of fuel as well as coal, are inexpensive to fix, and at night burn as little as 5 to 5½ lb. of coal in twelve hours; daytime consumption of course depends on your own needs. Further economy is effected because you do not waste fuel warming up chilly rooms in the morning, while the comfort to yourself is immeasurable—you can keep your fire in all the winter if you wish. Such good models as the Sutton, Everburn, Cavendish, Crofter, New Cheston, Firemaid are made in varying colours. Each may have its own individual points but all can be recommended. Cost is between £4 12s. and £5 10s. Installation is very simple.

SOLID fuel cookers also offer a wide variety of choice. In most cases they give a good supply of hot water, thereby saving a double expenditure of fuel. For instance, the Yorkvale burns coke, bituminous coal, anthracite and coalite.

Day and night consumption is estimated at about one and a quarter to one and a half hundredweights of fuel per week. This is no more than an average grate yet it covers cooking needs for a sizeable family. Stoking need be done only two or three times in twenty-four hours and the spinwheel on the ashpit gives control of the rate of burning. Oven temperatures are maintained however much the hotplate is used and a quart of water will boil on top in less than ten minutes.

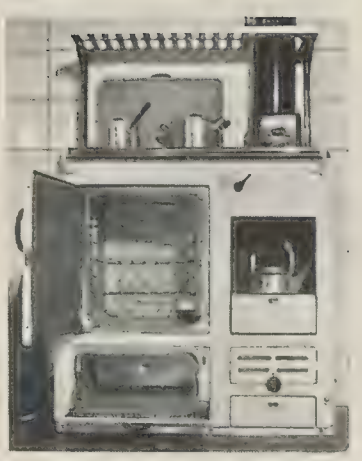
Another good insulated cooker, the Doric, has the advantage of a drop-front fire door which transforms the cooker into a fire to sit around.

The initial cost of these cookers is from about £44 but it is unwise to generalize on the cost of installation, which varies with circumstances.

IF you are not replacing your old apparatus meet the poor coal situation by correcting all defects in your existing stoves. Hot-water pipes and systems should be lagged, chimneys swept and checked over if fuel is to go furthest and give best service. Such things as overgrowing trees interfering with air currents around chimneys, height of chimneys, cracks in cement or brickwork at back of fireplaces, may all be impairing efficiency. If your local builder or solid fuel authorized distributors cannot help you sufficiently, write to the Women's Advisory Council on Solid Fuel, 18 South Molton Street, W.1, who will put you in touch with their nearest regional advisory officer.

The simplest rule of economy is to keep your apparatus, whether solid fuel, gas or electric, clean and in good order; and don't hesitate to take expert advice. The Coal Utilization Council has followed the example of the electrical and gas authorities in providing training courses for retail distributors, fitters of solid fuel appliances, and even for coal merchants.

LORNA LEWIS



A heat retention solid fuel cooker gives continuous burning, hot water and a fire-door which drops exposing an open fire when required. (*Yorkseal*)

This back-to-back continuous burning stove is connected to a solid fuel cooker in the kitchen with oven and hot closet, both apparatus being heated from the same fire. (*Yorkdale*)

The continuous burning fire gives the solution to inferior domestic coal. The Cheston (*above*) works economically on any type of domestic solid fuel and burns throughout the night without attention. Easily fixed in any open grate

BURNING QUESTIONS

Left: The shopping area in reconstructed Plymouth is planned on the precinct pattern and shops are built on the principle shown under an awning which shelters pedestrians. **Right:** A scale model of the entrance to Coventry's new garden shopping precinct

On The Way To Market

You like shopping or you don't and if you don't the chances are that you will when all shopping centres are as attractive as those which are appearing in Britain's new and re-created towns

UNQUESTIONABLY, the shopping basket is one of the major props of a woman's existence. Everything we use or wear in our everyday lives we have to, at some time, buy. Just as Tuesday follows Monday, and dishes follow dinner, so with each day comes the need to replenish household goods.

Some people order by phone, others have it delivered, or pick it up by car. But for most of us, the daily trudge with our trusty basket is accepted as one of the immutable facts of life.

Until now we also took it for granted that shopping, inevitably, was a rather tiresome and tiring business. We counted ourselves lucky if there were at least a few shops within easy walking distance of home. Even in a "good" shopping district we are accustomed to shops straggling all over the place; the butcher and the dry cleaners lying in opposite directions; the shoe repair man tucked away in a quite inaccessible side street.

But the world is on the move, and now, along with planned kitchens and planned economies, come shopping districts which are also thought out ahead instead of just happening. A number of them are already functioning in Britain's new towns, as well as in the bombed areas of Coventry and Plymouth, and many more are in process of being designed and built.

This is heartening news, but just what does a planned shopping district accomplish for the housewife? Well, to mention a couple of the more obvious points, it is more accessibly located, more conveniently arranged and much prettier to look at. It is specifically designed to save time and energy.

It all sounds beautifully simple, but the actual job of working out just how Mrs. British Housewife goes about her shopping has been an enormous undertaking. Just a glance at a document like the report of the New Towns Committee shows how much groundwork had to be done; the masses of facts and figures; the endless meetings; the wearisome bandying about of such phrases as zoning, density of areas, layout and architectural control, development of population; the complex discussions on the relative values and functions of the co-op, the multiple firm, the department store and the independent trader.

But from all these matters, very confusing to the uninitiated, gradually emerged a number of sense-making points from which the main working plan was developed. As Mr. F. J. Osborn, the editor of *Town And Country Planning* explained to me, each town requires a main shopping centre which serves the whole town, and in which will be located most of the big department stores. Then there should be a number of neighbourhood shopping precincts to take care of peoples' everyday needs (roughly, one precinct for every 16,000 people). And in very large towns there should also be an even smaller belt of shops, located near each of the primary schools.

Take for example the new town of Harlow, which will eventually have a population of about 80,000 people. Harlow has one big shopping centre, which is, quite literally, in the middle of the town. It also has four local shopping precincts.

SO much for facts and figures. But just to get an idea what a planned shopping district is really *like*, let's look at the neighbourhood precinct at Harlow. It is within a few minutes' reach of the residential area, separated from it by a very pleasant little park. As you approach the shopping district, the first impression is one of light and space and lovely, eye-catching colour. The background of warm beige and rosy brown brick is set off by cleverly used expanses of blue-grey tiling. Tubs of flowers, window boxes, and of course, the shops themselves, add their own note of vivid colour. Gay canopies above the shops effectively draw a line of distinction between the bustling, lively world of the shopkeepers below and the graceful, simple lines of the buildings above.

There *is* advertising, but it is not just smacked recklessly on to every available inch of wall. It is kept within the limits of the space allotted to it, so that it fits into the total design of the street.

The area covered by the shopping district is relatively

By PAMELA FRY

small, you can't walk more than a quarter of a mile in any direction, and the streets are all short. According to the architect, Mr. Frederick Gibberd, a long street is never effective in a shopping area. As he puts it, interest tends to taper off. So, of course, does energy. Architecturally speaking, the idea is to create the effect of a parade, a short, lively street with post office, pubs and community buildings at either end. All this, from the viewpoint of the shopper, means that the shops are conveniently collected into one place, easy to find and pleasant to look at.

For a glimpse of just what pleasure such a trip might offer we could find no better example than the shopping precinct at Coventry. It is described as a shopping garden and that is exactly what it is.

Car parks and bus stops are arranged outside the actual shopping centre. Inside, the shops are (*Continued on page 70*)

The plan for the new city of Plymouth, now constructing, is based on the Roman cross with a north-south axis running from the main railway station to the sea front and an east-west axis crossing at right angles. The latter, a main traffic route, forms the southern limb of an inner ring road which encloses the principle shopping area and directs through traffic from these streets

No traffic will enter the precincts of Coventry's new shopping centre, below, where large shops are sited on the lower level and smaller ones on the next with offices and flats above. The children's playground shown in the centre of the model below, has now been substituted with a garden

Knitteds

This jumper has been designed with a small wing collar to fit neatly under a jacket. The stitch and the instructions are very simple and could easily be tackled by the novice knitter. The directions are given for a garment to fit a size 36- to 37-in. bust, working at a tension of 10 stitches and 12 rows to 1 in. The jumper takes 6 ozs. of Wakefield Greenwood's "Springtime" 2-ply Super Botany Fingering, 1 pair of No. 14 and 1 pair of No. 11 needles.

To Wear With Tweeds

FRONT

With No. 14 needles, cast on 140 sts. and work in rib for 3½ ins. (56 rows) as follows :

1st row.—K. 1, * k. 1, p. 1 ; rep. from * to end, k. last st.

2nd row.—K. 1, * k. 1, p. 1 ; rep. from * to end, k. last st. (K. into back of all k. sts. except end sts. to give a twisted effect.)

End with right side of work (54th row) and inc. to 160 sts. on next row as follows. Inc. in the 4th st. and every following 7th st. to end.

Change to No. 11 needles and work as follows :

1st row.—K. **2nd row.**—* K. 1, p. 1 ; rep. from * to end.

3rd row.—As 2nd row.

4th row.—* P. 1, k. 1 ; rep. from * to end.

5th row.—As 4th row.

Rep. rows 2 to 5, inc. 1 st. at beg. and end of the 7th row and every following 6th row until there are 182 sts. and 85 rows, working extra sts. in patt. as they occur.

End wrong side of work. Inc. 1 st. at end of next 4 rows (186 sts. and 89 rows). End wrong side of work.

SLEEVES

Cast on 10 sts. at end of next 2 rows (206 sts.). Continue on these sts. until end of row 134.

Now make pockets as follows :

POCKETS

With another pair of No. 11 needles, cast on 38 sts. and work in st.st. for 29 rows. End p. row.

Put these sts. on a spare needle and work another pocket as described.

Return to main piece. Work 44 sts., cast off 38 sts. in patt., work 42 sts., cast off 38 sts. in patt. and work to end.

Next row.—Work 44 sts. ; work 38 sts. of 1st pocket in patt. ; work 42 sts. ; then work 38 sts. of 2nd pocket. Work to end.

Continue in patt. until end of row 161.

End wrong side of work.

Neck Opening.—Divide for neck opening as follows :

Work 103 sts. and with a second ball of wool work to end.

Continue using two balls of wool until end of row 172, when shoulder shaping begins as follows :

Shoulders.—Cast off 12 sts. at beg. of next 6 rows at sleeve edges.

Cast off remainder.

BACK

Work as for front, omitting pockets and neck opening.

POCKET FLAPS

With No. 11 needles, cast on 38 sts. and work 4 rows in patt. as described.

Now dec. 1 st. at beg. and end of every row until all sts. are off. Work another piece as described.

TO MAKE UP

Press each piece lightly under a damp cloth on the wrong side with a fairly hot iron. Sl.st. pockets on inside, sew flaps to pockets along cast-off edges ; turn down and press lightly. Sew side seams and shoulder seams for about 5½ ins. from sleeeve edge. Turn down front corners to form collars and press lightly.

Tailored For A Town Suit—(Continued from page 43)

work to match.

COLLARS

With No. 14 needles, cast on 100 sts.

1st row.—K. 1, * k. 1, p. 1 ; rep. from * to end, k. 1.

2nd row.—K. 1, * k. 1, p. 1 ; rep. from * to end, k. 1 (k. into back of k. sts. except end sts.).

Rep. these 2 rows, inc. 1 st. at end of every 4th row until there are 108 sts. and 37 rows. Cast off in rib loosely.

Work another collar as described but inc. 1 st. at end of the 3rd row (wrong side of work) and every following 4th row.

SLEEVE CUFFS

With No. 14 needles, cast on 180 sts. and work 18 rows in rib as for welts. Cast off in rib loosely.

TO MAKE UP

Press each piece lightly Sew shoulder seams and side seams, sew in zip fastener, sew collars to wrong side of neck edge, turn over and press lightly.

ABBREVIATIONS: K.—knit; p.—purl; inc.—increase (work into front and back of same stitch); dec.—decrease (take two stitches together); st.—stitch; w.f.—wool forward; sl.—slip; p.s.s.o.—pass slip stitch over; w.r.n.—wool round needle.

for Autumn Suits

Tailored For A Town Suit

BACK

With No. 14 needles, cast on 140 sts. and work in rib for 3½ ins. (56 rows) as follows :

1st row.—K. 1, * k. 1, p. 1 ; rep. from * to end, k. last st.

2nd row.—K. 1, * k. 1, p. 1 ; rep. from * to end, k. last st. (k. into back of all k. sts. except end sts., to give a twisted effect). End with right side of work (54th row), and inc. to 144 sts. on next row as follows : inc. in the 18th st. and every following 35th st. to end.

Change to No. 9 needles, and work in st.st., inc. 1 st. at beg. and end of 9th row and every following 8th row until there are 156 sts. and 9 ins. above welt (81 rows) or desired length. End p. row. Inc. 1 st. at end of next 4 rows (160 sts.).

SLEEVES

Cast on 8 sts. at end of next 2 rows (176 sts.). Continue on these sts. and inc. 1 st. at beg. and end of the 94th row (178 sts.). Work 5 more rows, and begin patt. as follows :

100th row.—Inc. 1 st. in 1st st., * w.fd., sl. 1, k. 1, p.s.s.o., k. 2 ; rep. from * to end, inc. 1 st. in end st. (180 sts.).

101st row.—K. 1. p. 1, w.r.n., p. 2 tog., * p. 2, w.r.n., p. 2 tog. ; rep. from * to end.

Rep. these 2 rows, inc. 1 st. at beg. and end of every 6th row, working extra sts. in patt. as they occur, until there are 184 sts. and 117 rows. End wrong side of work.

118th row.—Inc. 1 st. in 1st st., work 89 sts. in patt., k. 4, work in patt. to end, inc. 1 st. in end st. (186 sts.).

Next row.—Work to 4 middle sts., p. 4, work to end.

Continue without further inc., working 4 middle sts. in st.st. until beg. of row 124, when neck opening begins as follows :

Neck Opening.—Work 93 sts., then with another ball of wool, work to end. Continue using two balls of wool until end of row 151, when shoulder shaping begins as follows :

Shape Shoulders.—Cast off 13 sts. at beg. of next 10 rows at shoulder edges, then cast off 12 sts. at beg. of next 2 rows at same edges. Cast off remainder.

FRONT

With No. 14 needles, cast on 140 sts. and work in rib as for back. Inc. to 144 on last row.

Change to No. 9 needles and st.st. and work until there are 156 sts. and 71 rows. End p. row. Begin patt. as follows :

72nd row.—K. 40, * k. 2, w.fd., sl. 1, k. 1, p.s.s.o.* ; rep. from * to * 18 times, k. 40.

73rd row.—P. 40, * p. 2, w.r.n., p. 2 tog.* ; rep. from * to * 18 times, p. 40.

Continue the patt. as described until end of row 81.

Inc. 1 st. at end of next 4 rows (160 sts.) and shape sleeves as described for back.

Inc. 1 st. at beg. and end of 94th row and continue as for back until end of row 99 (178 sts.) wrong side of work.

100th row.—Inc. 1 st. in 1st st., * w.fd., sl. 1, k. 1, p.s.s.o., k. 2 ; rep. from * to end, inc. 1 st. in end st. (180 sts.).

101st row.—K. 1, p. 1, * w.r.n., p. 2 tog., p. 2 ; rep. from * to end, w.r.n., p. 2 tog.

102nd row.—* K. 2, w.fd., sl. 1, k. 1, p.s.s.o. ; rep, from * to end.

Continue patt., inc. 1 st. at beg. and end of every 6th row as for back until there are 186 sts. and 46 rows from underarm. End k. row (132nd row).

Shape Neck.—Work 88 sts. in patt., cast off 10 sts. (purlwise), work to end.

Work left shoulder first. Cast off 4 sts. at beg. of next row at neck edge, 2 sts. at beg. of next 2 rows at neck edge, then dec. 1 st. at beg. of the next 3 rows at same edge. Now 77 sts. Continue without further shaping until end of row 151.

Shape Shoulder.—Cast off 13 sts. at beg. of next 5 rows at shoulder edge, then cast off 12 sts. Join wool at neck edge of right shoulder and (*Continued on opposite page*)

This blouse takes 6 ozs. Templeton's Ayrbeam Super Scotch Fingering 2 ply, 1 pair No. 14 and 1 pair No. 9 needles, and 1 zip fastener 4 ins. long. Working at a tension of 8 stitches and 9 rows to 1 in. measured over the stocking stitch, the blouse fits a 36- to 37-in. bust

Hair and Hazards

Perming is one hair hazard, millinery another, for hat and hair style must harmonize. Here is the perfect hat for hair worn below ear level, the low back allowing the hair to curl softly under it

ALL too often, a permanent wave is an unpredictable undertaking with even chances of its being a good or a bad one. This is a lamentable state of affairs, considering the many women who have not one perm a year but several.

A "bad" perm can cover a multitude of failures, from a wiry dried-out frizz to a complete disappearance of the curl after a week or so. A good perm is simpler to recognize, because it leaves the hair soft and in good condition, with a natural looking wave which sets well to the desired style. How can a "good" perm be guaranteed? Certainly not by recommending this or that system. There are too many factors involved for any one system to be infallible on all conditions and types of hair.

Much of the hazard involved in perming lies in the fact that few women realize that permanent waving is a major hair operation. It affects the fundamental structure of the hair. That is why disasters can—and do—happen. A perm is not an undertaking to be taken lightly, with as little forethought as for a shampoo and set.

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THREE main factors govern the success or otherwise of a permanent wave. The first, is the condition of the hair, in itself a complexity bound up with the general state of health; the second is the choice of system; the third, the operator. The first two factors are under the control of the woman considering a perm, in that she can choose the system of perming, and she can condition the hair to receive the perm, or put off the appointment until such times as the hair is in a fit state to take the wave successfully. Factor three, the operator, is more variable, but more of that later.

What every woman can and should do to eliminate the first hazards of perming is to see that the hair is in a condition to take the wave. Hair is nourished directly by the blood stream, and even a day off-colour will affect the hair so that it may not take the wave successfully. If the hair is in poor condition, either through illness or from any other reason, nurse the hair back to health before contemplating a perm. The fat shortage over the last years, reflected in the low percentage of fats in shampoos, etc., as well as a low fat diet, has brought about a serious impoverishment in hair conditions generally and one nation-wide perming system has had to be adjusted to take account of the new low in modern hair health. That is an indication of the close relationship between the condition of the hair and the success of the perm.

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SO far as choice of system is concerned, no one method of perming is necessarily better than another. All systems are capable of adjustment to suit any type and condition of hair. And this is where the hairdresser plays his vital part.

The success of a perm, in the final count, depends on the operator. It is he who decides the waving times, the strength of the solution or whether the hair can take a mild, medium or weak solution to achieve the perfect perm. It can never be a facile judgment and demands the skill of a craftsman's instinct and training. How is it possible to ascertain whether a certain hairdresser has, in fact, this skill and the experience of the system being used?

That, of course, is a delicate question. Reputation and previous experience, either of your own or other women's, counts for a great deal. Further guarantee is offered by going to a hairdresser who uses one of the branded permanent waving systems. This often implies a period of training with the particular method and a thorough knowledge of the system.

Beauty by Chrysis

Any hairdressing salon which takes pride in the quality of its work will be happy to verify that the operator who is to perm your hair is the holder of a certificate and has undergone training in the system which you have chosen.

It may need a certain brand of courage to ask for such credentials, but a perm is a delicate operation demanding the hairdresser's highest skill and every woman owes it to her hair—if not her pride in appearance—to verify that her hair is in expert hands.

Once having made a judicious choice of hairdresser, then details of procedure should, and can, be left to him. A permanent wave is not an arbitrary crimp superimposed upon the hair structure. The hair should be permed *for a style*, the method of winding being governed by the dictates of the desired style. This, of course, involves cutting and shaping the hair during some period of the perming process. A first-class hairdresser tapers the hair according to the wave and shapes the hair to take the perm.

Tell the hairdresser exactly what you require from the perm and leave it to him to achieve it. If you want a soft, natural curl effect, he will certainly be able to give it you, but the risk will be that the wave will be a weaker one and may not last as long as you are accustomed. The common reason for over-perming the hair is that hairdressers wish to avoid the risk of complaints that the wave has " come out " too soon.

If, however, you are expecting to keep your perm for six months (making allowances for cutting, of course), then you will need a stronger perm, with the risk of getting a certain frizzing at the outset. The choice has to be made, and can only be made by you.

If you have a hair problem, or any beauty questions on which you would like advice, write, enclosing a stamped and addressed envelope, to Chrysis, " Britannia and Eve," Ingram House, 195, Strand, W.C.2.

The type of forward-tilted hat photographed is perfect for short hair. But if these revealing hats are to be as good from side and back as from the front, the back hair must be perfectly groomed. Whether the hair is curled and brushed upwards as in the sketch, or smoothly tapered into the nape of the neck, neatness of neck-line is essential.

Azaleas, among many other varieties of flowering shrubs, flourish in the acid soil in which other plants will often wilt and come to nothing.

by W. E. SHEWELL-COOPER

ACID GARDEN

If acidity is the cause of your ailing garden you can still have flowers every week of the year by growing the plants which flourish in lime-free soil.

WE hear a good deal about acid people but not so much of acid gardens, whereas both are apt to crop up anywhere.

The problem of a garden which is absolutely lime-free, and therefore acid, is that many of the ordinary flowers and practically none of the vegetables will flourish in it.

So far as the vegetables are concerned it is quite a problem, though it can be overcome. As to flowers, though there will be some things that will not grow, it is still possible to have a flower-filled garden by planting those that will. Azaleas, for instance, camellias, most of the heaths and heathers, the rhododendrons, eucryphias, all species of pieris, daboecia in variety, and the lovely andromeda.

There are other reasons, of course, for an ailing garden (incidentally, it is quite possible to have the soil analysed), but if you suspect acidity, try these lovely shrubs. First, a word of warning about clay. Some of these will be acid, but they may be badly drained. It is a waste of money to plant shrubs in water-logged soil, because the roots will only die in the winter. So if you have to cope with clay, pay attention to drainage before planting. It helps all soil to break it up well. Some of the sourest soil I know is very tightly packed and then the soil organisms cannot live and work—a good forking over makes all the difference, and especially if this is done methodically trench by trench, so that the soil 18 ins. down or so is tackled as well as the top few inches. During this process it is a good thing to add sedge peat at about two bucketfuls to the square yard.

The sandy soils, of course, are ideal, providing the gardener is prepared to mulch. Mulching is a process of applying sedge peat all over the ground to a depth of about 2 ins. It smothers all the baby weeds, and so *no* hoeing has to be done. It provides a kind of blanket all over the surface of the ground and thus prevents moisture from evaporating.

Plants love to grow in land treated in this way, and though some people complain that the sedge peat is dear, it isn't really, because it saves so much labour. In fact, it means that once applied no further work has to be done on the border for the rest of the season.

ONE of the plants that takes no looking after at all, and so is a great favourite with everyone, is the heather. Heathers love lime-free soil, though there are one or two species which will grow on land that contains a little lime. Before planting it is worth while trimming the tops a little and cutting off some of the roots. Then having made the necessary hole with a trowel—put in a handful of peat, and plant so that the heather is about ½-in. deeper than it was in the nursery bed. Then with your biggest boots on, tread very firmly around each plant and repeat this about six weeks later. This treading firmly cannot be over-emphasised.

Heathers can be planted in many ways, in beds on their own, they can be put in as border plants for rhododendrons or azaleas, they are excellent on a bank, while some varieties make quite attractive, neat low hedges. Even though you have an acid garden, and if you choose varieties carefully, you can have flowers every week of the year from early January to late December.

In the case of the varieties that grow a foot high, they need to be planted a foot apart. Those 18 ins. high can go as close as 18 ins. apart, but any varieties taller than this had better be planted on the 2-ft. square principle. By planting in this way, you can almost guarantee to have the whole of the soil covered in two or three years' time.

There is very little to be done with the heathers, other than to trim off the dead flowers the moment that particular variety has finished blooming. Always buy strong, well-grown plants and not just rooted cuttings, and I find you can get excellent specimens for about 1s. 6d. each. If you want a large number they usually come cheaper. If you have any difficulty about getting a catalogue or plants, drop me a line. As there are a very large number of varieties to choose from, I will mention a few favourites.

There is the Dorset Heath, a rich pink which flowers from July to October and grows about 15 ins. high; the Cornish Heath, on the other hand, flowers over the same period, but a variety called "Mrs. D. F. Maxwell" is very pretty indeed, being a deep cerise; "County Wicklow" is usually only 9 ins. tall and is a low-growing double pink; another double is "H. E. Beale," which is taller, on the whole; the Irish Heath is another favourite, and perhaps the best is the Atropurea of a deep purple.

So far I've been mentioning the summer flowerers, but there are those like "Brightness," which will bloom from January to April, or "Darleyensis," which bears rose-pink flowers with brown anthers. (*Continued on page 72*)

A House Restored

WHEN bombs fell on Sloane Avenue, Chelsea, a few years ago, ruined shells remained of houses so shattered that only a few tottering walls still stood. On the site of one of them this new house has been erected to the design of Mr. Theodore Beck, F.S.I., F.R.I.B.A., who has united the essential factors of recent architectural practice with some pleasing traditional features. The pitched roof, with its dormer windows, have a certain picturesqueness, while the lower windows have the spacious proportions reminiscent of the eighteenth-century tradition.

Inside, the happy merger of contemporary comfort and traditional grace continues and makes a background for the period furniture which Mr. and Mrs. Richard Jessel, the owners, have collected and displayed with care and admirable taste.

The front door on the side of the house opens into a wide hall with natural oak woodwork and arched doors leading to the dining-room, kitchen and hall cupboard.

The sitting-room upstairs (**top**) has broken-white walls and curtains of grey-toned green velvet. A fine Marieschi Venetian scene hangs over the sofa, which has a quilted covering toning with the green of the curtains. The **staircase** and banisters, like the doors, are natural waxed oak, and the arch motif, seen in the view from the dining-room into the hall, **left**, is featured throughout the house on doors and shallow recesses. The painting by Wilson in the hall is of the Thames at Richmond, and surmounts the Regency side table.

The broken-white background is continued in the drawing-room (**above**), where a Sickert flower painting hangs over the fireplace and is flanked by a pair of French sconces with lustres and branch candlelights. Eau-de-nil brocade covers the settee and a fine eau-de-nil china inkstand sounds the same colour note on the Hepplewhite sofa table. The opposite end of the same room (**below**), shows the ivory satin-stripe corded silk curtains and gracefully proportioned built-in shelves for books and china. Two views of the dining-room (**right**) in which Zoffany's portrait of Sir William Young hangs with *The Lustre Bowl*, by Sir William Nicholson, and Romney's *The Brown Man*.

Pastel-green walls in the main bedroom make a delicate background for chintz curtains with a bouquet design on an ivory ground. Lyre-backed Empire chairs have seat covers of the same material and the armchair cover is in green and white-striped silk. The bed, left, has a marquetry back framed with an oyster satin swag matching the diamond quilted bedcover. The white-tiled **kitchen**, though compact, utilises every inch of space and yet retains a comfortable impression of "elbow room." **The bathroom**, half-tiled with green, repeats the architectural theme of rounded arches with imposing effect.

Leisure into Pleasure

ONE of the pleasures of finding ourselves with " time on our hands " is planning how to use it in the most satisfying way. Most of us lead such busy lives that time left over from the demands of the home, or the breathless business of a career, becomes a challenge—full of possibilities.

Perhaps you are one of the fortunate few with a family beginning to stand on its own feet and a certain amount of leisure for the first time in years ? Or maybe you 've just succeeded in getting things organised so that you 've a little leisure to turn into pleasure.

What to do with it ? Shall you sit in a corner with your feet up, or turn towards a spare-time activity that offers the chance to learn something new—to meet new people and open up interests ? Once you get down to it, there are endless things to do and splendid facilities for becoming proficient in one's chosen subject.

Perhaps you 've thought what an advantage it would be to make or trim your own hats ? You are handy with a needle and would like to learn to make your own furnishings—loose-covers and curtains ? You are interested in good cooking but have never had the time to raise your own standards above the common rut.

You are not committed to any rash expenditure in taking a course of any of these classes. Local authorities of all big cities run them at a most moderate charge, often less than ten shillings. In the London area, they are organised by the L.C.C. and particulars can be had from the Education Officer at local Town Halls ; or you can apply at the local office of the Workers' Educational Association, who run similar courses ; or to the Polytechnic.

All these subjects, of course, offer the chance to earn money, if you become really proficient in any one of them. Then suppose you favour something purely academic in interest. In this case, you can choose between subjects as widely varied as Child Psychology, Local County History, Poetry, Music and Art, International Affairs and Handicrafts—to name just a few.

Of course, a great deal depends upon how much free time you have. There are day and evening courses of different lengths : some have only one two-hourly class a week, for instance—others as many as five !

IF you 're undecided on your subject, or uncertain how far ahead you can count on having time to spare, you can " dip into " a subject by taking a Short Course to start with—one of, say, 6–12 classes in all.

For enthusiasts who can spend a week-end, or even a week or two, away from home, it is possible to start off with a short residential course on a particular subject and follow it up with day or evening classes locally. Many of these residential courses are held in country houses amid beautiful scenery, and one is left with a little time to look around between study hours.

Residential short-term courses vary from the long week-end type (Friday to Monday) to those of several weeks' duration. In the case of one or two where I enquired, fees were in the region of just over £1 a day, inclusive of board and lodging, but, of course, they vary.

Some colleges—such as Ashridge, in Hertfordshire—announce forthcoming courses in the Press in advance. Ashridge, which has accommodation for 170 students, is in lovely countryside about thirty miles outside London, and covers a wide field of subjects.

An excellent reference calendar which gives a list of residential short-term courses throughout the country is available from The National Institute of Adult Education, 35, Queen Anne Street, London, W.1. (Price, 9d.)

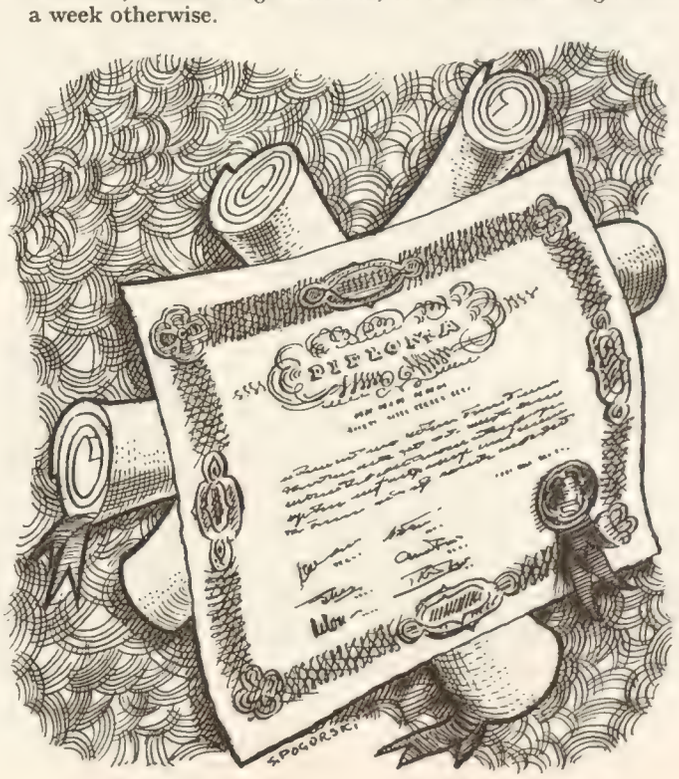
The L.C.C. publish a book at the same price, which gives particulars of classes in the London area—" Floodlight."

BESIDES organised classes held throughout the country, there are also any number on specialised subjects, held by experts in their own fields. Are you a gardening enthusiast ? Then you may like to spend some spare time learning about rose culture ; or how to get the best out of a small garden ; or the right way to prune fruit-trees.

I am told by the Principal of a Horticultural Centre in Essex, for instance, that he accepts women as part-time students—adjusting fees accordingly—as long as they are willing to work in with his regular students and adapt themselves to the ordinary routine. The same applies in many other cases.

Short courses and evening classes on the care and arrangement of flowers can be taken in London. The fees are from three guineas upwards.

Week and fortnight long courses in flower work and cookery and occasional long week-end courses (from Wednesday evening until Sunday) have now been arranged at Winkfield Place, near Windsor—Constance Spry's school, which is run in a lovely country-house setting. In the longer courses, a choice of further subjects (dressmaking and women's crafts) may be taken in addition. Fees range from six guineas each for friends sharing a bedroom, for the long week-end, to ten and fifteen guineas a week otherwise.



BY MARGARET STEVENSON

Margaret Sharp

Shopping for You

PRETTY enough for a trousseau, practical as regards washing and wearing qualities, this glamorous nightie with its matching bedjacket, in sky-blue shadow-striped nylon and lace, comes from D. H. Evans's underwear department. Each garment is particularly well finished and can be had in pink, turquoise, lilac, peach or black. The nightie is 74s. 11d. and the jacket 46s. 6d. In the same department there is the most ravishing nylon underwear. There is something there for every taste, plain or frilly, young pastels or sophisticated black.

CHOOSE a corduroy housecoat for ease and elegance during the winter evenings to come. The one sketched on the left was in green, tailored as slickly as a man's and trimmed with white silk braid and white silk-fringed sash. It can also be had in royal blue and cherry at a very reasonable 5⅓ guineas from Fenwick's, of Bond Street. Inset is a cute little white fur fabric hat, a version of the popular "half a hat." It will look right in any weather and has the great advantage of surviving the rain and not blowing off in the highest wind, owing to the cleverly concealed metal grip inside. There is an alternative style on the same principle and in the same material, which is rather more bonnet-like for those who prefer a little more coverage. Both hats come from Fenwick's at a reasonable guinea.

THIS autumn, Brevitt shoes are in colours to match the season and your suit. Champagne, sherry and rich liqueur shades will walk in harmony with fabrics. In the picture **below, left**, are three styles in the new colours, price from 3 gns. Braemar woollies are welcome back to the home market, still at their same wonderful pre-war quality. Heavenly soft cashmere twinsets with matching scarves are available in many lovely colours at about 12 guineas, scarf 35s. 6d. Something new for knitters, **below**, Ribbonknit, a rayon ribbon specially designed for knitting, crochet and hand-weaving. It is quick and easy to make up, does not crush and washes well. It lends itself to original stitchery, the cravat below, right, being in looped hairpin work. Ribbonknit comes in gay colours at 4s. 8d. a hank.

If you would like to know where items mentioned on these two pages can be bought, write, enclosing a stamped and addressed envelope, to Margaret Sharp, "Britannia and Eve," Ingram House, 195 Strand, London, W.C.2

NO need for a rainy day to ruin a smart occasion, when you can carry a fashionably elongated umbrella as chic as those to be found at Susan Handbags. These four styles, slender and elegant, give an idea of the fine designs and materials. It is enough to say of the business end of the umbrella, that it is reliable. The fashion factors lie in the covers and handles. There are check, plaid and plain silk covers, ruffed, cuffed or tailored; classic or novelty handles. Prices range from 52s. 6d. for the umbrella with the plain white handle to £5 12s. 6d. for the crook-handled one in the centre

EACH season, cotton becomes more versatile, more fashion conscious. Its latest guise is as a gold printed fabric, which will grace winter evenings as cocktail dresses and evening gowns. The gold will not rub off or be impaired by washing. This Marchington gold printed cotton (**below left**) is only 10s. 6d. a yard 36 in. wide, in black, a rich red or green. Other designs are coming along. A new cocktail shoe (**below right**) in black elasticized lace with the fashionable bare heel look, is designed to be worn with short evening dresses. They are unexpectedly kind to the feet and comfortable to wear. Available also in white at 69s. 9d., this is just one example of the "four o'clock onwards" shoes to be found in the Pompadour Room of Lilley and Skinner's. Untarnishable gilt necklace by De Farre price £6 10s. 6d.

THESE Kayser Bondor pyjamas, sketched right, are guaranteed to keep you warm on the chilliest of nights. The novel Turkish trouser-legs fit snugly round the ankle to keep out cold draughts. They are made in a wool and rayon mixture, which is light in weight and warm to the touch. You can have them in pink, blue or turquoise, price 63s. from D. H. Evans of Oxford Street. One bra will do the work of many if it happens to be one of the new English Rose "More-ways" brassières sketched right. By moving the straps which hook on to the looped edging, and altering the front lacing, you can wear it with plunging bateau, halter or heart-shaped necklines. A dainty little affair, in pink, white or black nylon satin and jaquard, it costs 16s. It is made in sizes thirty-two, thirty-four and thirty-six with two fittings to each size

The Delectable Cabbage

No vegetable is more flavoursome, more variable or more maligned

IF your previous acquaintance with cabbage has been limited to a bad smell in the corridor, let me introduce you to it anew. Of all vegetables, cabbage seems to me to be the most mistreated and maligned; and yet, when I recall some of the delicious—yes, I *said* delicious—cabbagy meals I have enjoyed, I am filled with wonder that anybody can be content with cutting cabbage into wodges, slinging it into boiling water, adding a handful of soda for good measure, and boiling it as if it were dirty washing! There are actually *some* people who eat the horrible result, too! Not you, of course, good reader—at least, I hope not after you have read the following paragraphs.

Before we introduce our cabbage to the stove, let us consider some of the uses we can put it to, raw. The fleshy pale-green inner leaves can be shredded and added to your mixed salad, together with grated raw carrot and grated raw beetroot. And Cole Slaw, beloved of Americans, is perfect with cold roast beef. Here is the recipe:

Shred the firm heart of the cabbage finely, and add half a medium-size Spanish onion, also shredded. Cover with cold salted water, using a piece of rock salt the size of an egg to two pints of cold water. Leave for at least an hour, then drain well (toss it in a salad basket if you have one, so as to be sure it is fairly dry). Put the shreds into the salad bowl, and prepare a dressing made of a rounded dessertspoonful of granulated sugar, dissolved in half teacupful of hot water. Let this get quite cold, and then fill the teacup with distilled white vinegar. Stir, and pour over the cabbage a quarter of an hour before you intend to use the salad.

Sauerkraut is shredded white cabbage, pickled in brine. It can be made at home, but the process is bothersome and a little smelly as the pickling and pressing proceeds. Most delicatessen shops sell it by the pound, and it can also be obtained in tins. For a quick meal, try it cold with smoked liver sausage, pressed beef, or ham sausage. Cooked, it is the mainstay of the French Choucroûte Garnie. This is how you cook it:

Dice a small onion and cook till transparent in a little fat. Add a pound of sauerkraut (it costs about a shilling a pound), a cupful of warm water, and a sliced tart apple. Do not add any salt. Put the lid on the saucepan, and cook slowly for an hour. Now you can serve it as a vegetable, but if you want to make a veritable Choucroûte Garnie, add one thickish slice of ham and one frankfurter sausage per person, cook slowly for a quarter of an hour longer, and serve.

I like to serve hot sauerkraut with beefsteak pudding, or with plain grilled sausages. Try them all; your family will arise and call you blessed.

Still on the subject of shredded cabbage, this is a good supper dish: Use a small firm cabbage, put the shreds into a pan of boiling water with a nut of salt, and cook for a quarter of an hour. *No!* No soda! Soda doesn't preserve the colour—it merely helps to produce that smell. Which reminds me—do keep the lid on. While the cabbage is cooking, make a thinnish cheese sauce as follows: Melt a nut of butter or margarine in a pan, add a rounded dessertspoonful of cornflour and stir till it bubbles. Then add gradually slightly less than half a pint of milk, season with salt only, and stir till it thickens. Sprinkle into the sauce a tablespoonful of grated cheese, reduce the heat (because no cheese mixture should boil) and cook gently, stirring, for another five minutes. Drain the shredded cabbage—do not press it—pour the cheese sauce over it, and top it, if you like or can, with a poached egg apiece. Eat it with toast.

BY now you may be wondering what to do with the dark green outer leaves of the cabbage. This is what I do with them:

Stuffed cabbage. Allow one large green leaf per person. Place in a dish, and pour boiling water over them. Leave them for three minutes so that they soften and become pliable. Then roll each leaf round two tablespoonfuls of the following stuffing, which you have previously prepared. Mix together six ounces of minced raw beef, two ounces of minced bacon or ham, half an onion, also minced, a teaspoonful of paprika, the same of salt. Add a little chopped parsley, and bind with a beaten egg. Place the cabbage rolls side by side in a saucepan containing half a cupful of good brown gravy, or, if you prefer it, tomato soup, and cook very gently for twenty minutes. Serve with plain boiled potatoes. You can make this dish more "classy," if you like, by adding half a wineglassful of tarragona wine to the gravy five minutes before you serve it, and serving with small button mushrooms, stewed in the same gravy. In such a case, of course, you'd call it *Chou farci à la Française*, and you would accompany it with creamed and well-whipped potatoes.

The stuffing can be varied, (*Continued on page* 72)

by Janet Darby

she holds Beauty in her fingertips

Beauty at any age belongs to the woman who follows the famous Elizabeth Arden ritual—Cleanse—Tone—Nourish. To her incomparable Essentials, Miss Arden now adds Special Hormone Cream, to give back to the skin the vital substances of which the natural supply begins to diminish after thirty

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Elizabeth Arden

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Children In Exile

By Barbara Sim

ONLY mothers know the degree of anxiety which fills them when illness offers no choice but to part with a sick child while it is in hospital. Those who can detach themselves from the emotional stress of the situation may argue that, at such times, all other considerations are secondary to the need for professional care. These are cold facts, but to the mother and child this is a dramatic experience, preceded either by the shock of sudden illness or accident or by the gradual and tormenting realization that exile is inevitable.

To nurses and medical staff, the presence of young children in hospital is a commonplace. However sympathetic their intentions, the emotional factors tend to be viewed as obstructive to the task in hand. It is, as yet, only in the more enlightened quarters that the psychology of healing is acknowledged as a factor equal in importance to physical treatment.

Every week thousands of children are admitted to British hospitals; then comes the question from mothers: "Must I be so harshly segregated from my child in its time of greatest need? Is it *really* essential that visits should be so short and so few? Is my influence as a mother so negligible that it must be subjugated to the convenience of the professionals temporarily in charge?"

The autocracy of the hospital is, or has been, supreme, but is it right?

There is a wide divergence of views on the subject, and, as always, something to be said for both sides. Some hospital authorities contend that children are not seriously disturbed by separation and that maternal possessiveness leads to unnecessary fuss; that visits from mother upset the child emotionally and retard progress.

Certainly, visitors add to the work of the nursing staff. They are inclined to bring unsuitable food; to talk to the little patients sentimentally and stir up emotional scenes at parting. These criticisms are valid, but surely in these days of enlightenment concerning human relationships, goodwill and ingenuity should find a compromise between the two points of view? Though some children are more resilient than others, many suffer miserably from the separation from home and well-loved familiar things and I have seen children whom the nursing staff have described as "settled down" whose set white faces hide the apathy of despair.

EXACTLY one hundred years ago, when the first children's hospital was opened at Great Ormond Street in London, ordinary hospitals refused to admit children under seven. Great Ormond Street was a pioneer hospital then. It is still, for two years ago it began the experiment of allowing *daily* visiting of young children by their parents. Mothers are encouraged to come each afternoon, and far from just sitting at the bedside, they give the children their suppers, or feed them if they are infants. They may play or read to the child, clean teeth, hear prayers and tuck the little one in for the night. If there are tears, mothers may stay until the child is asleep.

St. Thomas's and Guy's hospitals are among others where similar schemes are in operation and in the provinces the five hospitals of the Chichester group, and others at Bristol and Newcastle, are following suit. So far, all these schemes seem to have justified themselves.

Writing on the matter, Professor Alan Moncrieff, physician, and Miss A. M. Walton, ward sister at Great Ormond Street Hospital, have said:

"We believe that this daily hour spent together by mother and child helps to continue their relationship and does not break up the sense of security which means so much at this age. The child's needs are being satisfied jointly (*Continued on page 72*)

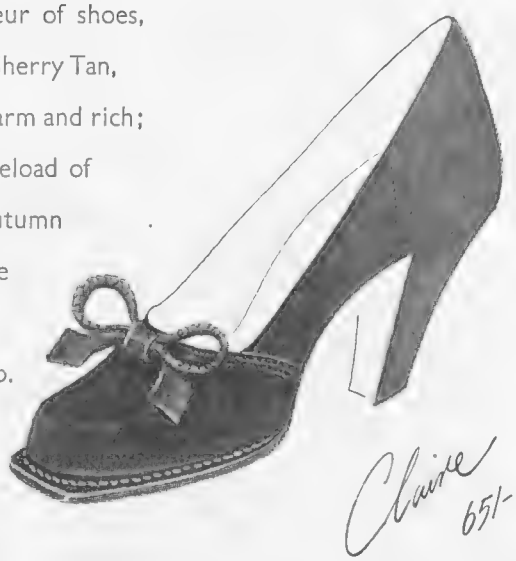
The pioneer work started a century ago at Great Ormond Street Hospital, where this picture was taken, is exemplified to-day in the movement begun there to make child patients more accessible to their mothers

Sherry– and the new Silhouette

Clarks COUNTRY CLUB

— shoes with a sense of occasion

Note, connoisseur of shoes, new stimulating colours—Sherry Tan, clear and crisp; Amberglow, warm and rich; Hawthorn Red, glowing as a hedgeload of berries. Note the fresh detail of the autumn silhouettes, the sidetilted line of the Envelope Vamp. Select them in silky leathers, finely used and treated, from this covetable autumn choice of Clarks Country Club.



Jessica: *Sherry Tan, Black, Parchment, White and Blue. Leather soles.*
Mendip: *Amberglow, Hawthorn Red, Evergreen and Black smooth leather.*
Grafton: *Cognac Brown, Fathom Blue and Black Calf. Leather Soles.*
Bedale: *Hawthorn Red, Cognac Brown, and Black Calf.*
Claire: *Amberglow, Cognac Brown, Flagship Blue and Black Calf. Leather Soles.*

Nearest shop? Write Clarks **Dept. A.2, Street, Somerset**—*and ask for a style leaflet*

A Trinity Of Talent

(*Continued from page* 35)

Blyton leaves off," she says). Her romances are the yardstick by which other such books of the type are judged and found wanting. ("I've written more than I can remember. I lost count at the first hundred. . . .")

Thus one could expect her to be ethereal, love-lorn, if you like; at least dreamy and starry-eyed. She is none of these things. Rumbustious Ruby M. Ayres is rising seventy, and as good and zestful company as anyone could wish for; a woman with a tongue that can sting and a wit dry as the driest drink from old Jerez.

Miss Blyton, at Christmas, will write to the literary editors of the Sunday papers and ask them not to review her books. "Give the new unknown writers my space instead," she says.

Miss Ayres does no such thing. She just does not care whether her books are reviewed or not.

"What difference does it make? I don't write anything unless it's ordered. But I'm lucky. I gets tons of orders. I say: 'How much?' and if the price is right—then I write. Let 'em review or ignore 'em, say I. They still sell. . . ."

Most times, the price is right. But it was not ever thus. She wrote her first story while still at a Watford school, passed it round her classmates for their opinion.

The headmistress heard of this ex-curricular literary activity, and summoned her to her study. "Did you write this, Ruby?" she asked.

"I did," replied the young Miss Ayres, feeling, as she told me once: Fame at last.

"Well," said the head severely. "We can't have our girls writing *this* sort of thing. You'll have to leave." Which thing she did.

RUBY has been writing much the same "sort of thing" ever since and with fabulous results. Total sales so far: three and a half million copies.

Before the war, she had two cars; an Austin and a Daimler, with a chauffeur to drive them.

Now, she lives in a biggish house in Surrey; keeps three dogs, enjoys nothing more than a regular trip to London. ("I like people, not places," she says. "I'd rather have a chat with a copper in Soho any day than all the views you care to mention.")

Like Enid Blyton, Ruby M. Ayres answers all her own letters. "It's quicker than having a secretary. I know. I had one once. . . ."

Her letters bring her many laughs.

"One woman wrote and told me she could write as well as me—only she couldn't sell anything she wrote. She sent me one of her stories. I gave her some suggestions for altering it and she sold it.

"Next thing, she sends me a huge manuscript. I see it is no good; unpublishable; tripe. I send it back. Next day she writes in anger: 'Who do you think you are?'"

Ruby chuckles. "I wrote right back and told her. . . ."

She writes. . . . "when I feel like it and only if there's nothing better to do. Sometimes I write ten thousand words and sometimes only two. It all depends on the mood I'm in.

"I don't believe all this talk of some writers about getting up at six and so on. If they do, they're fools. If they don't then they're liars to say they do. . . ."

Some people sneer at her work. Not unnaturally this annoys her, for she is the kindest, most casual person herself and absolutely without pretension.

One such amateur critic remarked to a friend in a bar: "My dear, but I just can't *read* books like Ruby M. Ayres's."

Cracked the irrepressible Ruby M.: "Maybe not—but could you *write* books like 'em?"

To which, as Byron noted on another, earlier occasion, answer came there none.

Which retort serves for those who detract the styles of all three in this trinity of talent. *You* may not like all their books either—but can you do better yourself? Exactly.

Books

(*Continued from page* 30)

HOW I envy readers who grasp at a 760-page novel, crying "Ha! Now for a whole month's jolly old read!" To the reviewer bulk is a bane, and he is prone to ask: Must any tale, however well told, be *that* long? The range of Storm Jameson's **"The Green Man"** (Macmillan, 15s.) is prodigious; there are so many subsidiary characters that if the reader isn't careful he'll be killed in the crush. Her chief one, Andrew Daubney, is the son of a hard-up, scholarly editor, and nephew of the chairman of a chemical combine and master of international finance who, surprisingly, quotes T. S. Eliot. When Andrew joins his uncle's business he bridges two worlds and their conflicts, in love as well as social standards. But I despair of giving in a few lines the scope of this vast family saga.

IF Capt. Fisby, post-war village administrator on Okinawa, had gone crazy, no one could have blamed him, considering that he suddenly had two Geisha girls wished on him. This and other complications under Plan B for democratizing the island make V. J. Sneider's **"The Tea-House Of The August Moon"** (Macmillan, 12s. 6d.) a deliciously amusing novel.

RIVIERA sunshine sparkles in the gay dialogue of Vivian Connell's **"September In Quinze"** (Hutchinson, 12s. 6d.), a comedy of playboy kings, millionaires, blonde *poules*, black poodles, pimps and types as sinister as glossy black limousines. Since it is the Côte d'Azur with its gaming tables, romance merges into intrigue and melodrama.

RICHARD CHURCH has my sympathy; whenever he writes a novel, reviewers remind him that he is a poet, doubtless because he puts sensitive beauty into his backgrounds. (Incidentally, he is also a shrewd *John o'London's* critic and publisher's adviser.) **"The Nightingale"** (Hutchinson, 10s. 6d.) is Milly, meant to be a singer, sent to a commercial college by her dominating sister Priscilla, but freed at last from her by the love of her father's German partner. A gentle, reflective study of relationships in which one may savour style as well as story.

JAMES HANLEY can write of sailors—a breed he knows first-hand—without being either forcefully tough or heavily Conradish. **"The Closed Harbour"** (Macdonald, 12s. 6d.) is Marseilles, closed to French merchant skipper Marius because he lost his ship—and master's ticket—on a rock in the war, and was suspected of having killed his nephew, one of the crew, in a row with his officers. His futile quest for another ship brings him to brothel, degeneracy, madness; a tragic figure, interpreted with pity, tenderness, rare skill.

EDITH TEMPLETON needs only a modest 250 pages to tell the story of Prague-born Franciska, daughter of a frivolous, amorous mother, who goes to Paris, marries a neurotic Englishman, finally leaves him, and in Italy (of course) finds romance that convinces her she is very much her mother's daughter. **"The Island Of Desire"** (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 12s. 6d.) is witty, sophisticated, touching, tragic, and wholly commendable.

AS for Nancy Spain's **"Out, Damned Tot"** (Hutchinson, 10s. 6d.), it's terrific, breathtaking, Schizo-Frenic—to steal a much-used term from the tale itself. Who shot Evelyn St. Leonards, highest-paid writer for tiny tots, just as he got on his hind legs to make a speech? *Surely* not an ingrate tiny herself, who should know better? But out, damned reviewer. What more can he say than that this is Another Spain?

CUNLIFFE OWEN'S **"Maroon"** (Hale, 10s. 6d.) is a dramatic story of two big West Indies estates and their owners' reactions to a zealot who wants to reform the Negroes.

IN **"Moab Is My Washpot"** (Benn, 12s. 6d.) E. G. Cousins spins an exceptionally good yarn round Allied Military Government in the wake of the Italian campaign.

JOAN GRANT'S **"So Moses Was Born"** (Methuen, 12s. 6d.) dispenses with the bullrushes and makes him the son and heir of Pharaoh "Rameses II" whose story she tells in a modern colloquial style lacking the magic of her *Winged Pharaoh*.

STEPHEN GILBERT'S **"The Burnaby Experiments"** (Faber, 15s.) are an elderly millionaire's glimpses into life after death, helped by a youth with a prescient gift who comes under his psychic domination both on this side and the other, after he "passes over." Speculative, unusual, hardly convincing.

WAS there such a to-do about the building of a dam in N.W. Wales a century and a half ago? Showell Styles takes that as his central theme in **"Land From The Sea"** (Faber, 12s. 6d.). A sound story, well written, especially on the hero's Peninsula campaign experiences. Harriet Westbrook and Shelley come into it, but I have yet to meet the fictionizer who can make that not so ineffectual angel one-tenth as convincing as Ernest Raymond does in straight biography.

OTHER books recommended to readers include:

FICTION

"Laird's Choice," by Rosamond Marshall (Alvin Redman, 10s. 6d.); **"Little Creole,"** by Rosamund M. Chambers (Cassell, 15s.); **"Reunion In Florida,"** by Tod Claymore (Cassell, 10s. 6d.); **"A Flight Of Falcons,"** by Françoise d'Eaubonne (Robert Hale, 12s. 6d.); **"Inherit The Wind,"** by George Vaizey (Harrap, 12s. 6d.); **"Moon In Scorpio,"** by Robert Neill (Hutchinson, 12s. 6d.); **"Call Back Yesterday,"** by Anne Meredith (Faber & Faber, 12s. 6d.); **"Cape Town Affair,"** by Alastair Scobie (Cassell, 10s. 6d.); **"Painless Extractions,"** by Oliver Anderson (Arthur Barker, 9s. 6d.); **"The Great Tradition,"** by Frances Parkinson Keyes (Fifth Edition, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 12s. 6d.); **"Christian Marlowe's Daughter,"** by Frances Parkinson Keyes (Eleventh edition, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 12s. 6d.).

MISCELLANEOUS

"You And The Opera," by Stephen Williams (Macdonald & Evans, 6s.); **"The Revenge For Love,"** by Wyndham Lewis (Methuen, 15s.); **"Shell Fish,"** by Nell Heaton (Faber & Faber, 9s. 6d.); **"A Slight Touch Of Safari,"** by Alastair Gordon (Max Parrish, 10s. 6d.); **"No Sportsman At All,"** by J. K. Stanford (Faber, & Faber, 18s. 6d.); **"How To Be Attractive,"** by Joan Bennett (Kaye, 10s. 6d.).

END

TIME IS THE ART OF THE SWISS

There's more in this than meets the eye . . .

Of course you want your new watch to look nice. And in the wide range of fine Swiss watches you will be sure to find many which will delight your eye. Whether in gold or in steel; to wear on the wrist, the finger, the lapel—there are watches in just that beautiful, fashionable style you are looking for. See them and judge for yourself.

But seeing is not all. A watch, however beautiful, is more than a piece of jewellery. A good Swiss jewelled-lever watch is the most precise time-keeping mechanism in the world, designed to give you faithful, reliable service. The appearance of a watch is important, but its works are important too—and there you cannot judge for yourself; you need expert advice.

Your jeweller is the expert to advise you. He loves beautiful things, and he understands watches too. He knows that watches which look alike on the outside can be very different inside. He alone can show you how to distinguish the good watch from the others, because he alone is the representative of the Swiss watch industry, chosen for his knowledge and skill. Let the jeweller guide your choice. Then you will have a watch which is as fine as it looks.

Your jeweller's knowledge is your safeguard

The WATCHMAKERS OF SWITZERLAND

Dinner With Uncle Matthew

(*Continued from page* 12)

Uncle Matthew was the sort of man who could get the best of what was going, wherever he might be. There was a pleasant bottle of Pouilly on ice. He lifted the glass to his lips. Yes, it was cold enough. Aunt Edith's sigh of relief was quite audible. He savoured the wine delicately.

"A *Pouilly Fuissé*, 1933, I think. Is it all right, Marian?" he asked. It was a rhetorical question.

"I suppose it is." She was not going to flatter him by assuming expertness. Besides, she was not happy about the treatment of Aunt Edith, though to be sure she had not expected a cooing among the wine-glasses. If he was aware of the chill in her reply, he gave no sign of it.

Conversation was not vigorous. He had something to say about the garden, the thinning and staking of the red roses. He seemed to know something about it. Edith started off about a washing-machine they had found in the kitchen in good order. But once again he stared at her, it did not seem to need more than three or four seconds, and the subject died on her lips. He did not like the washing-machine switched on over the Sheraton table. The meal came to an end with a green salad and a Camembert, at this time still a luxury. Aunt Edith rose. Marian rose, too.

"We'll have coffee in the sitting-room," said Aunt Edith.

Matthew moved his arm along the table and touched Marian's hand with his finger-tips.

"I hope you don't mind, my dear"—he was addressing his wife and his voice had the silky smoothness of his pointed beard—"I hope you don't mind. Could Marian stay on and crack a few walnuts for me? It would be quite like old times."

THAT was a fiction. There had never been an old time when Marian cracked walnuts for him. Was this the moment to say something at last? Marian looked into her aunt's eyes.

Please do as he asks, Edith's eyes said. Without a word, Edith went out of the room. Without a word Marian sat down again. The man-servant brought a bowl of nuts over from the sideboard, and put down two fruit-plates. Then he brought the decanter.

"Here you are, my dear," said Matthew. That meant the nut-crackers. "Do you mind?"

"No," said Marian without warmth.

He circled the decanter clock-wise and set it before her.

"A glass of port, surely? The daughter of an Oxford Common Room!"

"I think not," she said. "Thank you. I'll wait for the coffee."

He shrugged his shoulders, then filled his glass.

"It's Dow '05, you know," he said, as if that might make a difference. He held the glass reverently to the light, then moved it to and fro under his nostrils. "Delicious," he murmured, and sipped it once, and again, and again. He had the faculty, it seemed, of completely absorbing himself in the moment's thought or act. She took a walnut from the bowl and cracked it.

"Oh yes, my dear," he said, as if the walnuts had quite gone out of his mind, in the intensity of his meditation on the Dow '05. He poured a little salt on his plate, she placed a cracked nut beside it, then a second, then a third. "Thank you," he murmured. "I don't really deserve it." No. Perhaps he did not.

The man came in with a taper, and hesitated a moment.

"Yes," said Uncle Matthew. The man lit the candlesticks like a Venetian mute, and went out on tip-toe. A few last birds bickered in the evening sky. Then these, too, ceased, and there was no sound at all save the cracking of the walnuts and the clink of the decanter against the glass. Then he sighed. Marian looked across at him.

"Wasn't it horrible," a voice asked, "over there?" She realized with embarrassment it was her own voice. There was no pity in it, merely a baffled curiosity.

He was smiling now. She saw the flash of his teeth in the candlelight. Then he raised his hand to his beard and stroked it affectionately.

"It was this," he said, meaning the beard. "The three years . . . in Parkhurst . . . weren't so bad at all. It was the six weeks it took me to get this right . . . they were the very devil. Shall we go in for our coffee now?"

END

The Heart Of The Berwyns

(*Continued from page* 29)

woollen industry of the Berwyn valleys is dead, killed by nineteenth-century concentration of industry. The flannel mills of Llangollen, the last to maintain their nation-wide fame, are a brave survival from the past.

NOT a single road crosses the main ridge of the mountains from the valley of the Ceiriog above Llansantffraid. For the strong walker, however, with map and compass there are shepherd's tracks, mostly following some deep cleft far into the mountains, then climbing steeply on to the moorland and crossing the heather and grass-covered plateau until the Vale of Dee comes into sight. The distance between the two rivers, from say Pandy to Corwen, varies according to the route taken from twelve to twenty miles. In all that distance the walker is unlikely to meet another wayfarer. He will certainly not see a cottage or a farm, let alone a village. As he tramps across the rank grass and thin heather he is in the midst of natural beauty untouched by man. He will understand how it happened that Welsh rebel armies in the Middle Ages were able to defy the English attack and seemed to melt into thin air at the approach of a well-armed and well-led English army.

The greatest of all the Welsh rebel chieftains, Owen Glendower, marshalled his bands near Corwen under the shadow of the Berwyns and led them out of the Vale of Llangollen to bring fire and sword into the English homes of the west country. It was at Corwen that he gathered his troops before the Battle of Shrewsbury in 1403, which proved his first real defeat. When we grow to know this countryside it is easy to appreciate the reason why this defeat, decisive enough in itself, failed to inflict a mortal blow on the Welsh people. Even in defeat they were able to turn and quickly take to the mountains where, scattering, they were beyond pursuit and safe enough until they could once more marshal their forces.

Down in Llangollen under the northern edge of the Berwyns the moorlands are forgotten in the different beauty of the warm green valley which is watered by the wide flowing Dee. Here except at Eisteddfod time English is spoken more often than Welsh. Yet though it is only a few miles to the English border, Llangollen is still very Welsh. The people are conscious of their proud heritage, of the noble bridge over the Dee, which they number among the seven wonders of Wales, of the many charming old houses and, above all, of Plas Newydd, once the home of the "Ladies of Llangollen" remembered in one of Wordsworth's sonnets, and now the home of the Welsh National Theatre.

On the other side of the river roads lead up past Valle Crucis Abbey and over the Horseshoe Pass to another range of hills which are a spur of the Berwyn range. But the character of the hills is changed. They lack the sense of remoteness, the loneliness and the unspoilt beauty which are the hallmarks of those four hundred square miles of mountain and moorland between the Vale of Dee and Lake Vyrnwy. END

A Fur Coat For Christmas

(*Continued from page* 33)

"No, thanks," she forlornly answered the driver, who, knowing good furs and snappy shoes when he saw them, had thought he had seen an opulent fare.

Here's my bus stop. No. I'll save threepence and walk.

She walked, uncheered even by shop-window reflections of her incredible glamourized new self.

Through blanketing despondency silted the sense that someone was following her.

Anyone might expect to be followed in a coat like this. . . . On she went, with a man at those elegant high heels. The footsteps quickened. At her shoulder a man's voice appealed huskily. "I say! *please!*"

She turned at the real urgency in the voice. The man she faced was very young, narrow-shouldered. He wore a good overcoat but had an unfresh collar and wanted a shave.

He spoke in asthmatic gasps: "You're not the *usual* lady? . . . Watched you come out, though. I saw her coat that——"

He lowered his voice, "Got it there?"

"You're making a mistake——"

"No, I'm not. I'm Harold Cooper. You know. Hand over, quick——"

Eve stared at him. Ill, haunted, driven he looked. Out of his mind, poor wretch? He must have got away from whoever looked after him.

Eve shook her head and hurried on. There were plenty of people about. She could dodge that lunatic. She had reached the Mews where she had her tiny attic flat above the lock-up garage at the bottom of the yard. She passed the heavy Victorian stone arch. Still the footsteps dogged her. She passed the waiting cars, reached the garage.

At her door she turned upon the man with the hungry eyes.

"Go away."

"It's all right, here," he muttered. "Hand it over. Have a heart!"

"If you don't go at once I shall call somebody."

He wheezed, urgently, "Inside pocket of the coat!"

Have to humour these poor mad creatures. Eve opened her coat. "There's no inside pocket."

"Higher up!" he urged. "Laura sews it up in the lining." He had a penknife in his hand. "*Please* let me——" (*Continued on page* 62)

NO OTHER SLIPS GIVE SUCH VALUE!

from 13/11 all sizes

and in Rayon Tricot from 9/11

THE perfect slip must give perfect fit and have perfect finish, too. Just look inside a Kayser Bondor slip — and see the quality workmanship of the stitching and seams. There you will find the superior finish that is your guarantee when you buy Kayser Bondor. These slips are made in 7 sizes, with 2 lengths to a size in some styles, and have adjustable shoulder straps. There is a wonderful variety in pastel shades and black. Pretty, practical and economical, they wash and wash and wear and wear. No wonder they're the best value your money can buy!

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Style ***209a*** *in nylon tricot*

A slip and pantee set trimmed with dainty net. All sizes 32" to 44", in two lengths, at **35/-**. Matching pantee, waist sizes 25" to 33", at **15/11.**

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A slim, figure-flattering slip with double brassiere top. All sizes 32" to 44", in two lengths, at **18/11.**

Style ***213*** *in crepe*

A hip slip with a deep net-trimmed flounce. Waist sizes 25" to 29", at **24/11.** The brassiere is *Style* 111 *in nylon* at **5/11.**

Style ***208*** *in crepe*

A tailored slip. All sizes 32" to 44", at **13/11.**

Style 216, with a double top at **17/11.**

Also *Style* 217 *in satin*, with a bias-cut skirt, at **19/11.**

Style ***204a*** *in crepe*

Proportioned to just the correct length for your size and made with a zip-fastening side placket. All sizes 32" to 40", in two lengths, at **22/6.**

★ *There are briefs from 4/3 and pantees from 5/11 in rayon tricot, to wear with these slips. Waist sizes 25" to 33". According to style*

KAYSER BONDOR

TAILORED WITH **YOU** IN MIND

Before Eve could move he had clutched the coat. His knife ripped threads.

From under his shaking fingers five small paper packets appeared. Avidly he seized them.

Eve heard the crisp rustle of a five-pound note; he was thrusting it at her.

"Here! Nobody coming ——"

But as if by magic there had sprung up behind them out of the very pavement two men: a big sandy Scot, a smaller, swarthy fellow with clever eyes and a scimitar nose. They placed themselves one each side of the scared youngster.

The big Scot held him by the arm, "Excuse me, Mr. Cooper," took the packets from him. He was shaking, silent with terror.

"Now, Madam——"

The plain-clothes man turned to Eve, asked for her name, address, occupation.

Appalled, she took in the situation. Police.... They had caught her, red-handed, as they thought.... Taking pay from a dope addict!

"—and would you tell us where you obtained these packets you had hidden in your coat-lining?"

"I'd no idea even that they were *there*!" (They will never believe me.) "I'd only bought the coat about half an hour ago, second-hand!"

"Who sold it to you?"

"A—a tall lady.... I didn't get her name, I answered an advertisement, she gave me her flat's address——"

"You bought it there?"

"Yes!" (Police won't believe me. It sounds too thin.)

White, shaken, the picture of guilt Eve looked: too innocent to know that the practised eye of the Law doesn't always go by that.

"And the address, Madam?"

Eve gave it; and the Scot nodded at the swarthy man.

His black eyes were on the film-starry fur coat.

"How much did you give her for the coat?"

"Thirty pounds."

"*Thirty pounds?* For that mink?"

(They're sure I'm lying.) "The lady made me a special price. She was packing up to go abroad, and——"

The big Scot gave a ow, penetrating whistle.

Along slid a black, long-bonneted police car.

"In you get. We shall want both of you, please. Right away, Tompkins!" The door slammed, and the car—there were two other men in it—slid on.

Tense and appalled Eve sat. She felt as if she'd been dragged out of her harmless every-day world, of which the sunlight was Frank's love and the darkest shadow was being too hard up to afford a fur coat. She was plunged into a murkier world, where Evil, in the shape of a soft-spoken, hard-faced drug-trafficker, preyed on Weakness who wore well-tailored clothes and an unclean collar, and who lurked furtively to buy the poison that it is a crime to sell. And she was involved——

Desperately Eve glanced up at the Scottish policeman sitting grim as the Grampians beside her. He stooped, picked the coat up from the floor of the car. Eve had shrugged herself out of it as if it were unclean.

"Yes. But hang on to it," he said, in quite a friendly voice now, and he laid the coat across her arm. "Here we are."

The car had drawn up at the steps to that block of flats.

THE lady from the top flat? Left, the hall porter told them. A car called for her about twenty minutes after this young lady —with a glance at Eve—went out of the building.

There was a swift exchange of looks among the men.

"Tompkins, get telephoning," ordered the Scot. "All railway stations.... Airports.... Other ports——" Then to the porter, "Let's have your key for the flat, Jim. Better see if she's forgotten anything."

Upstairs went two of the policemen, taking with them the haggard Cooper and the flustered Eve.

They met a waft of French scent. That bed-sitter was empty but for a litter of empty cartons and one long ragged sheer stocking that trailed across the floor like the shed skin of a snake.

"Well! 'Here's to the next time,' Laura Grey," remarked the Scottish inspector after swift investigation. "Milady evidently

A Fur Coat For Christmas

decided to scrape together the odd cash, cut her losses and skip. One o' the others gave her the tip, no doubt." He glanced at the telephone. "Meant to get rid of the stuff *pronto*.... Or leave a false trail.... That's why she wished it off on to you, Miss. We'll take your statement later. Sorry to have troubled you." He gave a sudden reassuring fatherly smile at Eve standing there, fresh-faced, bewildered, tall in her well-worn office-suit with the luxury coat trailing over her arm.

"Anyways the young lady's done well out of this," commented Abrahams. "A mink coat to the good—and given away. My word, I'd be glad to see a piece of luck like that come my way."

Impetuously Eve bundled the garment together, held it out to him.

"I couldn't wear it, now. Shoes are different, but"—she wrinkled her pretty nose in distaste at that pocket in the satin lining—"somehow I couldn't put it on again after *that*. Give me what I gave for it and you can take it away."

"*What?*"

Incredulity, amusement, regret, admiration, calculation and honest goodwill flicked across the face of little Abrahams.

"For thirty quid? No, Miss. I won't do that. Fair's fair. But I'll do this—I know a man in the line. He doesn't have to pay the earth in overhead charges and then take it out of his clients like these West End sharks. He'll offer a fair price for a good article. Especially to a lady introduced by me. I'll come with you myself."

LATER on, Eve met Mr. Abrahams' furrier-cousin at his Whitechapel work-room-place, an intriguing cave tapestried with pelts of wild beasts.

Here she was offered a hundred pounds down for "the Laura Grey" mink coat, plus the coat-in-exchange (alterations thrown in). Not quite as super . . . still! Real beautiful skins that any lady might be pleased to wear.

And I shall put it on, rejoiced Eve, to meet Frank at the airport!

END

The Cost Of Being A Queen

(*Continued from page* 15)

There is one money worry, at least, that our later rulers have been spared; that of financing almost the entire civil administration of the country—including the payment of judges, ambassadors and civil servants and upkeep of the royal palaces and households—from their own funds. From this erstwhile royal commitment came the name Civil List.

William III was the first King to be voted (in 1697) a Civil List by Parliament. He received £700,000 a year in return for surrendering certain "hereditary revenues of the Crown." But he found this sum totally inadequate and had to go to Parliament for more; as did Queen Anne and George I.

George II received an annual £800,000 but, like his predecessors, fell into debt. George III, with the same provision and an arrangement to retain the hereditary revenues of the Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall, did likewise; and George IV, surrendering further hereditary revenues, received £850,000. And with the allocation in his case of £60,000 of personal expenses came the beginnings of the modern Civil List.

Under William IV the antiquated system of the King financing the civil administration came virtually to an end. For this monarch was relieved of the payment of the judges, ambassadors and civil servants and was allotted £510,000—though he, too, had to give up some hereditary revenues.

A fixed Civil List, in return for further surrendered revenues, was now to be the rule; and gradually all charges other than for the direct upkeep of the sovereign and the royal establishments were eliminated from it.

Queen Victoria received an annuity of £385,000, and inherited along with it a tradition of wastefulness and extravagance in the Royal Household which her husband, Prince Albert, did much to put right. History relates how the Prince reorganized the chaotic economy of Buckingham Palace, abolishing the perquisites of idle officials and servants and placing the whole establishment under the sole authority of the Master of the Household.

IT says much for his administrative ability that he was able to make the Palace entertainments a byword for splendour and magnificence and yet keep within the allotted Household budget.

By the Prince's early death in 1861 the Queen was deprived of a sound financial adviser; but in her long widowhood she eschewed extravagance and lived simply, and in a debate on the royal finances in 1889 it was stated that she had saved no less than £824,000 out of her Civil List (though much of this had been spent on entertaining distinguished foreign visitors).

It is doubtful if such savings could be made to-day, with the multitude of extra calls on the royal finances that this more democratic century has brought, and the greatly enhanced cost of keeping up a necessarily regal state. The difficulty, indeed, is to make the Civil List suffice for all the calls upon it.

It was with further economies in mind—and no doubt with the idea of relieving the Queen of some of the burden that falls on a present-day monarch—that Mr. Attlee and other members of the Select Committee advocated "a change in conventions involving less elaborate ceremonial."

But they were outvoted, the majority opinion being that ceremonial was an integral and indispensable part of the royal tradition and that if that were cut something vital would go out of the monarchy.

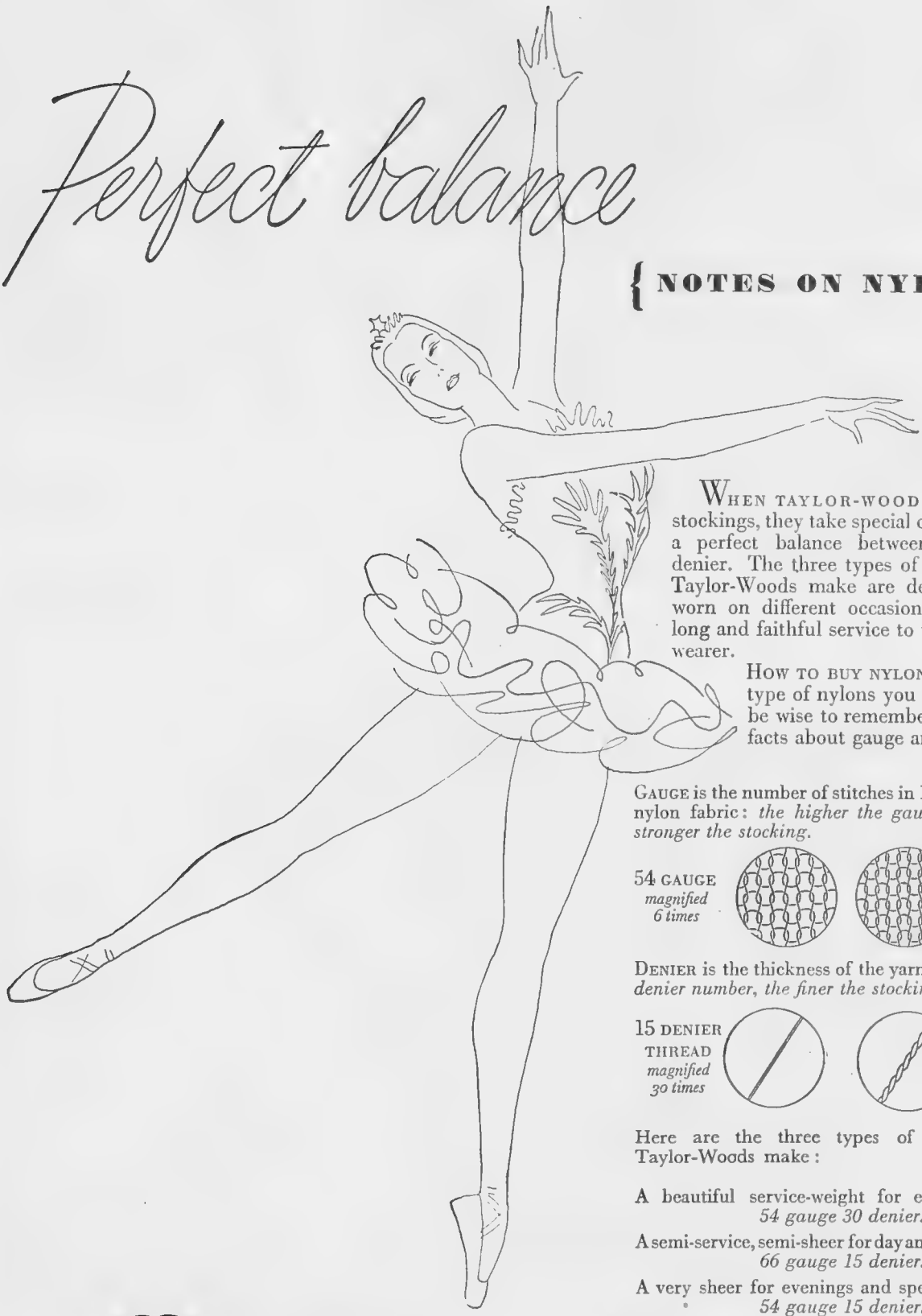
Seeing what an exacting service this country's sovereign is called upon to perform to-day, it is a wonder that the cost of being a Queen (or King) is not more than it is. And for those who grudge the money devoted to the upkeep of our monarchy, the example of the republic across the Atlantic will be little consolation.

For the President of the United States gets in salary and expenses the equivalent of about £67,000 and the total annual bill for the White House, including salary and expenses of staff and upkeep of the building and grounds comes to about £830,000.

END

Perfect balance

{ NOTES ON NYLONS }



WHEN TAYLOR-WOODS make nylon stockings, they take special care to achieve a perfect balance between gauge and denier. The three types of nylons which Taylor-Woods make are designed to be worn on different occasions and to give long and faithful service to the intelligent wearer.

HOW TO BUY NYLONS. Whichever type of nylons you buy, you will be wise to remember these simple facts about gauge and denier :—

GAUGE is the number of stitches in 1½ inches of the nylon fabric: *the higher the gauge number the stronger the stocking.*

54 GAUGE *magnified 6 times*

66 GAUGE *magnified 6 times*

DENIER is the thickness of the yarn: *the lower the denier number, the finer the stocking.*

15 DENIER THREAD *magnified 30 times*

30 DENIER THREAD *magnified 30 times*

Here are the three types of nylons which Taylor-Woods make :

A beautiful service-weight for everyday wear: *54 gauge 30 denier.*

A semi-service, semi-sheer for day and evening wear: *66 gauge 15 denier.*

A very sheer for evenings and special occasions: *54 gauge 15 denier.*

Taylor-Woods NYLONS

EXCLUSIVELY 54 AND 66 GAUGE

Are Our Birds In Peril

(*Continued from page 16*)

Disappointingly few appeared in parts of Sussex and Surrey during 1951, but 1949, 1950 and 1952 will be remembered by many people as glorious nightingale years.

The uprooting of hedges and the felling of roadside trees must inevitably disturb many of our common birds. This may well have contributed to the apparent decline of the little cole and marsh tits, two birds which suffered badly—like the kingfisher and the thrush tribe—in the winter of 1947.

Nor is the increasing use of machinery on our farms helpful to the birds. We are likely to see a sad shrinking in the populations of skylarks, yellow wagtails and other ground nesting birds during the coming years. Yet some skylarks have shown themselves strangely adaptable to the changing situation. Around my home they are increasingly abundant on the commons even as they become scarcer on the farmland. One wonders too if the hundreds of woodlarks which shed their beautiful song about certain open spaces in London have not been driven from our farms. For these birds profit from the farmer's depression; they thrive on neglected agricultural land but disappear as farming standards rise.

The growing mechanization of the land may well explain the sharp decline in the populations of corncrakes and lapwing—though this last winter has seen unusually large flocks of lapwing about certain parts of the south coast.

Altogether, we should not be too pessimistic about prospects for our birds. Not to-day do we find professional bird-catchers with nets, cages and limed twigs capturing 12,000 larks on the Downs in a single morning—which is what happened in 1897. (Where, for that matter, could you find 12,000 larks in one morning? Yet as recently as 1925, a scientist estimated that 50,000 larks crossed Kensington Gardens in ten days.)

Nor to-day do we find the people of Eastbourne eating 22,000 wheatears in one season, or the White Hart inn at Lewes paying £25 a year for skylarks and wheatears at a halfpenny each which were served on toast to visitors in the 1780s. Though one East Sussex fruit-farmer shot 100 bullfinches last year and another killed forty during last winter, the shooting of birds is increasingly frowned upon—though it is good that the neglected Wild Birds Protection Acts will soon be the subject of an important Parliamentary report.

This growing interest and affection for the wild birds has already led to a marked increase in the numbers of goldfinches, so tragically reduced for commercial purposes in Victorian times. Then the growing number of suburban gardens with young trees and shrubs swelling to maturity is aiding the blackbird who now numbers some ten millions and must be counted with the increasing starling and chaffinch as one of the most numerous of birds. For the same reason, we find the song thrushes recovering wonderfully well from their disastrous winter of 1947, when vast numbers died. Mistle-thrushes too are doing well, thanks to the growing abundance of fruit-bearing trees and shrubs.

Unfortunately, personal impressions of bird populations can often be dangerously misleading. Some birds fluctuate in number to a surprising degree every few years. A single severe winter, a bad outbreak of heath and forest fires, a decline in the number of gamekeepers leading to a growth in the magpie and jay populations may all menace the welfare of our singing birds. Though many species are doing well, there is much evidence that the 120 million land birds of Britain are tending to decline. Some naturalists firmly blame the grey squirrel for this development. (The matter could surely be settled by comparing changes in bird population in areas with and without grey squirrels.)

Meantime, one wonders what changes the future will bring. A reduction in our cat population—now some fourteen million strong—would help the birds. And with the mounting use of powerful insecticides and weed-killers on farms and gardens, they may well need our help.

END

The Dance Of The Daggers

(*Continued from page 24*)

"I have found a body upstairs."

"Lucha darling, it's the champagne."

"No, no. It's a man dead, quite dead."

"But you're always finding corpses, Lucha. Remember! On the beach at Viña! And he had only drunk too much wine."

"This time there is blood. Much much blood. There is Sir Alisdair. Go catch him."

Pepita went and gave a tug at Sir Alisdair's kilt. He bent down to hear what she had to say and then with a startled expression followed her and Lucha away from the ballroom where a waltz was just starting. The whole thing had happened because Lucha had taken the wrong staircase up to her room. It was a very easy thing to do in that house. It was a narrow steep little stair which she had taken with the banister on the right hand side. Her left thumb was carefully wrapped up in Kenneth's handkerchief. In spite of that, when she got to the top she had found blood on the palm of her right hand. She couldn't make that out until she looked at the carpet in the alcove above the stair. There was a wet red stain on it and even as she looked, a drop fell down on the dark polished wood of the banister. Lucha very nearly screamed when she saw it. But she kept control of herself and then noticed that the alcove was partially filled with a large laundry basket for household linen. She opened the lid of the basket slowly and shut it very quickly.

Sir Alisdair did exactly the same when Lucha silently pointed the basket out to him. He then turned to the two girls.

"I know it's a lot to ask, but I want you to go straight back downstairs and go on with the dance. Say nothing about this. Behave normally. Keep your eyes wide open. Please get down as quickly as you can."

THE first thing Lucha and Pepita had to do when they got back to the ballroom was to sooth a jilted partner. They did that gracefully without giving anything away. The next dance was another eightsome and they danced it in the same set. As usual the eightsome then became a foursome and they danced that, too. When that ended a young man in the Frazer tartan went up and whispered to the band. A long warning chord was played and then as the women drifted off to the side, four sets of men took their positions for yet another foursome. One set all wore the Macfane tartan and included Rob and Fane. Another set were all McLeans. The other two were mixed, but included all the best dancers in the room.

This time the band began at the normal speed, but almost immediately quickened it, and went on quickening it until the pace was terrific. The dance became an orgy with wild "hochs" and "heuchs" as the men spun round on their toes and heels and clapped their hands. Lucha's brain was in a queer state after the shock she had received. The reel seemed to be a savage, barbaric dance of triumph, and she lowered her eyes to the men's stockings. Sixteen skean-dhus there! Sixteen skean-dhus each with that murderous little point! Was it just one of them or more than one that had human blood on it? How could one tell in this strange, cold, highly coloured country? Lucha suddenly felt a little chilly in her scarlet dress.

THE police had thirty miles to come from Aberdeen. Four men sat round a table drinking whisky while they were on their way. These were Sir Alisdair, the Chief Constable, the Sheriff and Dr. Muir. The three latter were all guests at the party and the dance music filtered gently up to the upper room where they were sitting.

The Chief Constable had started the ball rolling.

"Well, doctor? What about the wound?"

"A clean downward stab in the neck," Dr. Muir answered. "Slightly on the left."

"And the weapon?"

"Almost certainly a skean-dhu."

"The position of the wound suggests that the assailant was a right-handed man?"

"It does. And either he was a very tall man or he had got his victim on his knees first."

The Chief Constable turned to Sir Alisdair.

"When was the body discovered?"

"A few minutes before twelve-thirty."

"Now, Dr. Muir. Can you say how long he had been dead?"

"Roughly, yes. From the amount of blood I judge that death wasn't quite instantaneous. I should say that the blow had been struck not later than midnight and not earlier than eleven-thirty."

"That would be during dances 9, 10 and 11. By looking at the programmes we should be able to see who was dancing with whom, and who wasn't dancing at all."

The Chief Constable now turned to Sir Alisdair again.

"Now the victim! Be quite easy for a stranger to come in and mix with the crowd?"

"Perfectly. There were no tickets or anything like that."

"But why should someone come in just to get murdered?"

The Sheriff now spoke up for the first time.

"Because he was blackmailing somebody."

"H'm, I thought you might say that. Any particular scandals going on in the neighbourhood, Sheriff?"

"Yes, plenty. I know of four jealous husbands. Two income tax evasions. And a bad black market case. And, of course, there was that old lady, Miss Stewart, who was found drowned at Bonniemuir last year."

"Why do you bring that up, Sheriff?"

"Because we were never quite satisfied how she got herself drowned."

"I see! In any case it seems that there may have been several mouths that somebody wanted shut."

The Sheriff nodded and the Chief Constable looked round at the other two.

"Well, until we find the weapon and identify the victim, I think that's as far as we can go. Any comments?"

"Only one." It was Dr. Muir who spoke. "The body was dressed well enough. But from his hands I should say he was a working man."

Downstairs Lucha was arriving at various deductions in a more emotional feminine manner. She knew that every man she danced with was a potential murderer. The first one after the dance of the daggers was one of the sixteen who had taken part in it. He was wearing a red kilt with a thin green stripe in it. That was how he was identified on her programme. She suspected him at first of being the same man, similarly described, who had cut her dance. (*Continued on page 66*)

The 'Silhouette' guide to *good form*

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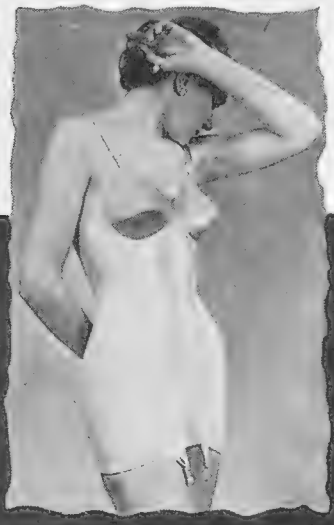

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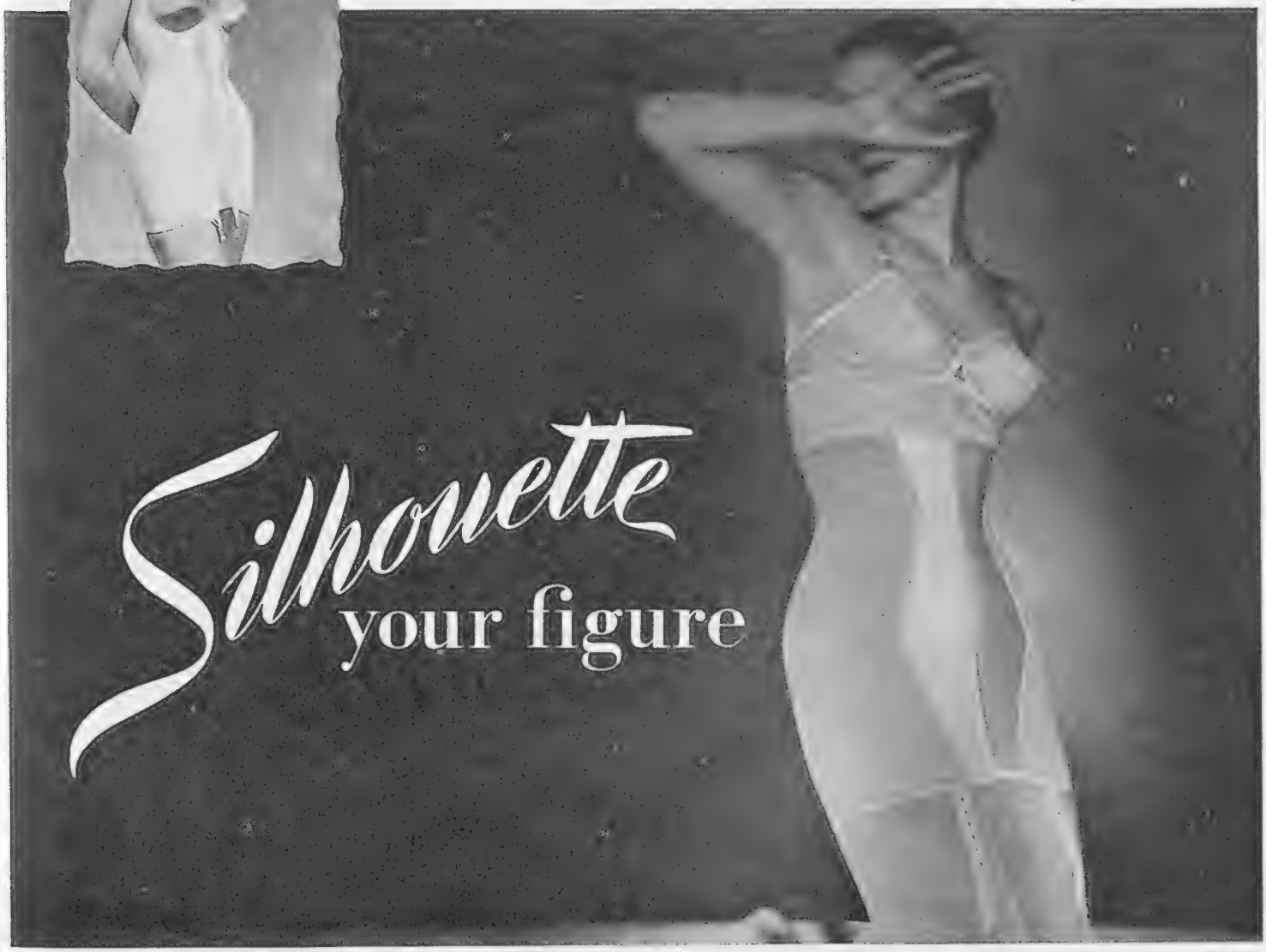

The next dance—it was a slow foxtrot for a change—was with Kenneth Macduff. It was her third with him and she suddenly found herself thinking that the only important thing in the world at the moment was that Kenneth Macduff must not be the murderer. If he was the murderer she would have to try and save him. Lucha had enough experience of falling in love—she did it with great frequency and abandon—to realize that this was extraordinarily like it. What could she do to save Kenneth from the clutches of the law? She then realized with much relief that she didn't have to do anything. She already was his alibi. He had shown her a perfectly clean dagger after the crime had been committed and she had pricked her finger with it.

The next dance was with Rob Macfane and as he had twisted his ankle Stripping the Willow, they sat it out. She was sitting on his right-hand side and the dagger in his stocking was quite near her own knee. Lucha did a little quick calculating. Rob couldn't be the murderer either, because he didn't have a dagger at the time. On the other hand. . . .

"I see you got it back all right," she said suddenly.

"Got what back?"

"Why, your skean-dhu."

Rob turned and stared at her.

"You mean it was missing!"

"Yes, before supper. About dance 9 or 10."

"Well, I'm. . . . This is going to cost me ten shillings. Kenneth Macduff bet me ten bob that he'd pinch my skean-dhu and put it back without my noticing it. He's always twitting me about being unobservant."

Suddenly there was a commotion in the dance hall. All the doors were filled with people pushing in, and then behind them came six uniformed policemen who took station at each of the exits. Silence fell as Sir Alisdair and the Chief Constable walked to the middle of the room.

Sir Alisdair spoke quietly, but every word was heard in the dead silence that followed.

"You will realize that I have something very serious to say to you all. A strange man has been found stabbed to death in this house. I want everyone to leave quietly now, handing your dance programmes to the police who are waiting at the doors. Every man also will leave his skean-dhu with the police for expert examination. Thank you. Good night."

Lucha knew what a hubble-bubble of comment, protest and dispute such an announcement would have made in Santiago. Here at Tullaballoch it made none; and if any man felt fear or guilt as he handed over his skean-dhu he certainly didn't show it.

LUNCH was the first public meal the following day and it was attended only by the remnants of the house party, namely, Rob and Fane, the two girls, and Sir Alisdair.

"Any news, Father?" Rob asked.

Sir Alisdair replied casually, "They've got their man and the whole case is cleared up."

All eyes now turned sharply towards Sir Alisdair. This was what he intended. He had been holding the news in since eleven o'clock.

Sir Alisdair now turned to Lucha.

"You danced with the man twice, Lucha. Apparently you didn't know his name. You described him as 'Red kilt, thin green stripe.'"

Lucha managed for the moment to forget the contents of Kenneth's note.

"I remember very well—but I only danced with him once."

"You've got him down twice on your programme."

"I know, but he cut the first dance."

"He did, did he! Then that's the last scrap of evidence. The time of the murder!"

Fane looked rather sourly at his father.

"Are you telling us that Hector Macphair is the murderer?"

"Yes, I am."

"Well, couldn't you be a little less damned mysterious about it?"

Sir Alisdair smiled.

"Very well, Fane, I'll try. But I'll have to go back a bit. Over a year ago Hector's aunt, Miss Stewart, was found drowned in the loch at Bonniemuir. It seemed an odd thing to happen as she was a tough old lady and could swim like a fish. However, there it was, she was dead and Hector duly inherited the property. That is point one. Point two was that our local policeman who was in charge of the car parking was able to identify the victim as a man who had been ghillie at Bonniemuir up to six months ago. Point three was that the ghillie was wearing a dress kilt—an expensive item—and therefore must have been going up in the world. How did that come to happen? Assumption: He had been blackmailing somebody."

"Our police don't seem to be so bad after all."

"No, they don't. On the other hand it was I who finally put them on the right track. I suddenly remembered—while I was making that little speech—that up to six months ago Hector had always worn the Macphair tartan. Why should he suddenly change to his mother's tartan? Sudden filial affection? Or had things come to such a pass that he thought crimson was a better colour? His skean-dhu looked as clean as a whistle when they examined it. However, they followed him—without lights—as he put on his cape and drove off. He stopped the car by the Pool of Tarra and got out. They caught him just as he was taking off his kilt. He had wiped the knife between the pleats on the left-hand side of his kilt. That was quite correct procedure, you know, in the bad old days."

Pepita made a grimace at this information and pushed her plate away.

"I'm sorry, my dear," Sir Alisdair went on. "Of course we are a very barbarous people, nearly as bloodthirsty as your own Spanish ancestors."

Sir Alisdair looked round the table and saw that Lucha was busily getting on with her cold grouse.

"Well, Lucha dear," he grinned, "at least I don't seem to have spoiled your appetite."

"I think I am in love," Lucha replied placidly. "When I am in love, I eat double."

END

The Dance Of The Daggers

The Good Natured Man

(*Continued from page* 38)

lessly on the arm of his chair with her mittened hand. "And really, you know, it is only a matter of proper feeding, of living the nature way. I try to make her believe, I give her pamphlets to read, but what's the use? She's too kind to say so, but she thinks me a crank. That's what they all think, a crank." She sat back, exhausted; and, while he was still searching for something to say, she said gently, "I will see if she is well enough for you," and slipped out of the room. He could not help thinking how generous it was of a man like himself to spend so much time indulging the whims of two crazy old women. He would make a good story of it to Charles when he got back; it would start, "You think I'm good-natured. . . ."

"Now, Mr. Bryan, if you will follow me." He walked behind her up a flight of stone stairs with a rickety hand-rail which rocked under his touch, and into a small, crowded room whose shutters were almost completely closed. Two small dogs rushed to meet him and snuffled curiously round his feet. As his eyes accustomed themselves to the light he saw an old lady, swaddled in a voluminous plum-coloured gown, sitting in an armchair and holding out her hand to him, and he stumbled across to it.

"So you are Charlie Holland's friend; come in, come in, Mr. Bryan, is it? This is a great pleasure; you must excuse my not getting up. I am not very well to-day." She held his hand in both hers and stared eagerly up at him; the dogs settled themselves under the shelter of her chair with little yaps and growls of protest.

"Quiet, Alix, quiet, Trixie. You mustn't mind them, Mr. Bryan, they are jealous girls, they suspect everyone who comes near me. Now sit down—yes, pull yourself up that chair, it's the most comfortable, and tell me about London. I remember Charlie, you know, since he was—oh, so high, so high. And he's a famous man now, I suppose. Tell me. . . ."

KIRBY saw with relief that she was very different from the *Contessa*; there was nothing droll or eccentric about her. She listened attentively as he talked, every now and then nodding or giving a little grunt of agreement or surprise; all the time her eyes searched his face as though she were hungry, not only for every word that he could tell her, but for every unspoken shade of meaning, for every undercurrent, however deep, however slight. He felt touched; and he exerted himself to give her something worth hearing, and that she could recall and enjoy again after he had left her. He talked about painting and painters in London and in Paris, about exhibitions and galleries, about Charles Holland's growing reputation as a critic and historian. He talked well and she listened avidly. All the time, on another level, his mind was working at the remembered scraps of what Charles had told him about her, fitting together the odd, half-related bits to make a picture. The widow of an English scholar driven by his health to settle in Italy; she had nursed him through years of invalidism, and when he died, she made her home there. Then the war came, there was trouble with the exchange, she had lost touch with friends in England; she never came back. Charles had talked about her in his vague, jerky way. Painting—she took up painting late in life, an outlet, he imagined, while her husband was so ill. Now she seemed obsessed by it, wrote of nothing else, was interested in nothing else. She must be eighty now, more perhaps. God knows. She writes extraordinary letters, she's all there, y'know. Pathetic, really—or isn't it? She sounds happy enough, but lonely; she wants to talk. . . . Pathetic was fantastically the wrong word, Kirby thought, studying her face. The skin was yellow and deeply creased like a parchment carelessly crumpled, worn by use rather than by age; round the mouth were faint, discoloured blotches. He judged her to be older than Charles had said; but her eyes were dark, lively and alert, and her voice without a quaver. She wore her hair piled in an elaborate white pompadour; her hands, laid passively in her lap, were almost hidden by rings. He began to wonder about her painting.

Suddenly there seemed no more to say; and he finished rather lamely, "Well, that's all I've got to tell you, I think."

She nodded consideringly, and he had the feeling that, though she had listened so closely, she was waiting for him to stop.

"Yes, yes, it was good of you to talk so much. In our queer little corner we live quite out of touch with life, don't we, Agnes?"

The *Contessa*, perched on a high chair by the window, waggled her head in agreement. The old lady's mouth twitched.

"Agnes and I were at school together, Mr. Bryan; we remember each other in pigtails and pinafores. You'll be surprised how soon old age comes, how little one is ready for it." She chuckled and coughed, and the *Contessa* said warningly, "You're talking too much, Bessie."

"Nonsense, it does me good. Here on our desert island, we don't talk enough. Not an English visitor in a year takes the trouble to come up here." Suddenly she laid her hand on his knee,

(*Continued on page* 68)

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her brilliant eyes stared deep into his. "But *you* came, Mr. Bryan, *you* took the trouble. If I were a religious woman, I should think God had sent you. But I'm a heathen, I don't know whether I believe or not. Does that shock you?"

He said mechanically, "Of course it doesn't," but in fact he felt disconcerted.

"Yes," she said dryly, answering his thought. "Yes, you are right, it is shocking, but it has its comforts. At my age, Mr. Bryan, one is not so sure of wanting the resurrection of the body." A film fell across the brightness of her eyes and she seemed to shrink into herself; she said almost under her breath, "If only one could be sure of going on working—I would believe anything if I could believe that."

KIRBY wondered what he could say to comfort her. His armour of condescension, his rôle of kind visitor to the aged, began to fidget him. He remembered Charles Holland's phrase, "She wants someone to talk to about her painting," and he said gently, "Tell me, won't you, about your work."

At once she revived, and he saw life flowing back into a dead face; her voice was firm and clear.

"Mr. Bryan, I can't tell you how happy and how proud you make me. That you should come all this way, that Charlie Holland should ask you to come, to fetch my pictures—ah, that makes me feel young again, almost it makes me believe in God." She laid her hand over his and spoke slowly and reverently, as though she were delivering a charge. "I want my pictures to go back to England. They were painted in Italy, but they belong to England, to my own country." Her hand tightened its grip, she seemed to speak with difficulty. "I want to give them, I want you to promise me. . . ."

Kirby was aghast; the situation ought to be wildly funny, but he had never felt farther from laughter. In a moment, when she stopped speaking, he must say something and he had not an idea what to say. He thought indignantly, "She is mad, they should have told me."

Abruptly the pressure of her hand lifted and she leaned back. A change came over her face, as swift as if a cruel hand had passed over it; the nostrils were sharply pinched, a grey pallor spread round the mouth, the eyes were dulled with pain. He sprang to his feet, crying, "You are ill, what shall I do, shall I fetch someone?" He just caught the words, "My tablets, a little brandy, don't be alarmed, it will pass;" and then the *Contessa* came running across the room calling shrill orders in Italian to the servant Anna who ran after her, and one of them caught him by the shoulders and half pushed him out of the door. He stumbled down the darkened stairs and found himself, thankfully, in the cool, tesselated emptiness of the hall. He was sweating; and, pulling out his handkerchief, he carefully wiped his forehead, and the back of his neck, and the palms of his hands. He had an impulse to open the door and step out of the house and escape without a word; but he could not go without knowing what happened to the old lady. Death had looked unmistakably out of her face; he wondered whether already the two women were drawing down the lids over her eyes. To his amazement the thought sickened him: old people must die, take it easy, why get in a state? He sat down heavily on a black wood chest studded with brass nails and drummed his feet on the stone floor.

A door closed sharply above him and the *Contessa* pattered downstairs. "Oh, Mr. Bryan, I was afraid you might have gone; oh, one moment, if you please." She came up to him with her absurd, mincing step and her head thrust forward. "My poor friend, these attacks exhaust her; if only she would be more careful of her food, more scientific—brown bread and vegetables. I shall have another little talk with her in the morning." She laid her hand, a bird's claw, on his arm. "She sent me with a message, Mr. Bryan. You are to promise to come again in the morning, you must choose her pictures. Please, you are to promise."

Kirby murmured awkwardly that he must leave by the mid-day bus; would she be well enough to see him? Perhaps some other time?

"No, no, I assure you; a good night's rest—sleep is a great healer, Mr. Bryan. At ten o'clock, then, we shall expect you. Now, if you will excuse me. . . ." As she opened the door for him, she drew a paper out of the little back leather bag swinging from her wrist. "A little pamphlet by Professor Muller—the disastrous effects of white flour on the stomach. Please read it, most instructive. . . ."

Kirby walked slowly back to his *albergo*. Already in the narrow street, like a gully running between high cliffs, the clear air was thickening towards dusk; but when he looked up he saw the sky jewel-bright between the overhanging roofs. Everyone was taking their ease in the friendly Italian way, talking, laughing and singing, clustering in groups under the arcades of the houses or leaning out from the unshuttered windows.

Kirby was profoundly disturbed; his thoughts rocketed. The strange household he had just left seemed like something he had dreamed; the watchful servant, the ardent old woman, the *Contessa* with her tripping walk. It was heart-breaking, but it was also funny; why not laugh and forget it? But then the pictures—here was pure farce, that he, Kirby Bryan, of all men, should be asked to take back and present to the nation a bequest of amateur paintings! He groaned aloud. No, no, better to slip away without seeing her again, to leave a note; so sorry, unexpectedly called away, hope to have the pleasure some other time. . . .

AFTER dinner he went down to the *piazza* and leaned on the stone balustrade, staring out over the plain. Colour still glowed in the sky, the feathery dark cypresses smudged against it were almost too Italian-looking; this was the Italy of the picture postcard and the travel bureau. The plain below him was dissolved in a blue haze, pricked here and there by lights; it was like a boundless sea washing up to the stones of an island town. As he stood there he felt his mood change; what was he afraid of? Perhaps after all the old lady was a genius. Suppose that were to be the end of the story, suppose he were to take back to England pictures by an unknown painter—unknown, that is, till Kirby Bryan discovered her—which would confound every critic and every connoisseur in Europe? God, what a scoop! He began to chuckle; suddenly he found himself laughing uproariously out loud.

IN the morning he found himself once more outside the guarded door of the *Casa* Mowbray. This time his knock was answered at once, and he fancied that the tone of the single word, "*Avanti*," was more cordial. The dark-eyed Anna invited him by a gesture to wait in the hall while she ran upstairs; "*Momento, signor.*"

Almost at once she came back and beckoned him; he followed her into a room, and she closed the door softly and left him. It was a large, light, bare room, evidently a studio; easels stood in a corner, and a drapery of tawny coloured stuff was thrown with almost too splendidly casual an air over a screen by the window. Propped against the walls were canvasses, and others lay spread on the floor; a few hung framed above them. He began very slowly to walk down the room, and then he stood still and stared, wondering if he were drunk or crazy. Every one of the canvasses was blank.

In a few minutes the door behind him opened briskly and the *Contessa* came in. She was dressed this morning in a tight jacket and skirt of grey and white check, the jacket standing out stiffly from the waist like a pigeon's tail; high-heeled white shoes that clattered on the bare floor; a black spotted veil drawn over her face and tied at the back of the little round white hat.

"Ah, Mr. Bryan, how very, very good of you. No wish to hurry you, oh, pray, don't let me do that; but I know we cannot keep you long, and there is something I must say to you now, at once, before you see Mrs. Mowbray." He detected a different note in her voice this morning, robuster and more confident; he looked curiously at her, wondering what in the world she could have to say, what he could find to say to her.

"If you would sit down for a moment—another chair; ah, thank you, thank you, now we can talk. Well, Mr. Bryan, what is the verdict? what do you think of them?"

Kirby made a helpless gesture. "*Contessa*, please explain. I don't understand, I don't know what you want me to say."

"No," she said gently, as if she were humouring him; "no, of course not, of course you wouldn't." She suddenly looked straight and full at him and spoke very simply and directly with a kind of melancholy dignity. "You must think all this very strange, Mr. Bryan, but indeed it is not strange at all. If I could make you see. . . . For twenty years Blanche Mowbray has lived for her painting; she has done nothing else, she has thought of nothing else, it has been her answer to life and death. She worked furiously, and as fast as she worked she destroyed, because all the time, you understand, she was struggling and failing. It was terrible to watch, terrible but grand. Then last year she had a desperate illness, and now she cannot paint, she is too weak even to leave her chair. But God has shown her his crowning mercy; she has forgotten her failures, she believes she has painted the pictures she has dreamed of." She put up her hand abruptly to shade her eyes. "Mr. Bryan, you saw her last night; you know what I have tried for a long time not to know, that she is dying. All she cares about is that her pictures should go back to England and to the world; if you can promise her that, she will be happy to die."

Kirby was nonplussed; he said primly, "Forgive me, but isn't that rather much to ask of a stranger? Frankly, if someone must tell her fairy-tales, why not yourself?"

"Because she would not believe me." A note at once despairing and inflexible in her voice made him look at her more closely; he saw that her face was set in grief and he guessed that in the night she had been weeping. He spoke more gently. "Listen, *Contessa*, you must be reasonable. I'd do anything I could to help, but what you ask is fantastic, it wouldn't even work. You say she is dying . . ." he hesitated, trying not to sound brutal, "Well, that may be, or she may rally, old people often do. Her memory may come back; or she may live out her phantasy for months, or years, expecting news from England, letters and reports of her exhibition. You can't ask me to go on writing her a pack of lies; I couldn't do it, she would not be deceived."

No, the *Contessa* agreed at once, she was not easy to deceive. Her dark, sad glance, which had been wandering round the room while he spoke, focused abruptly on his face.

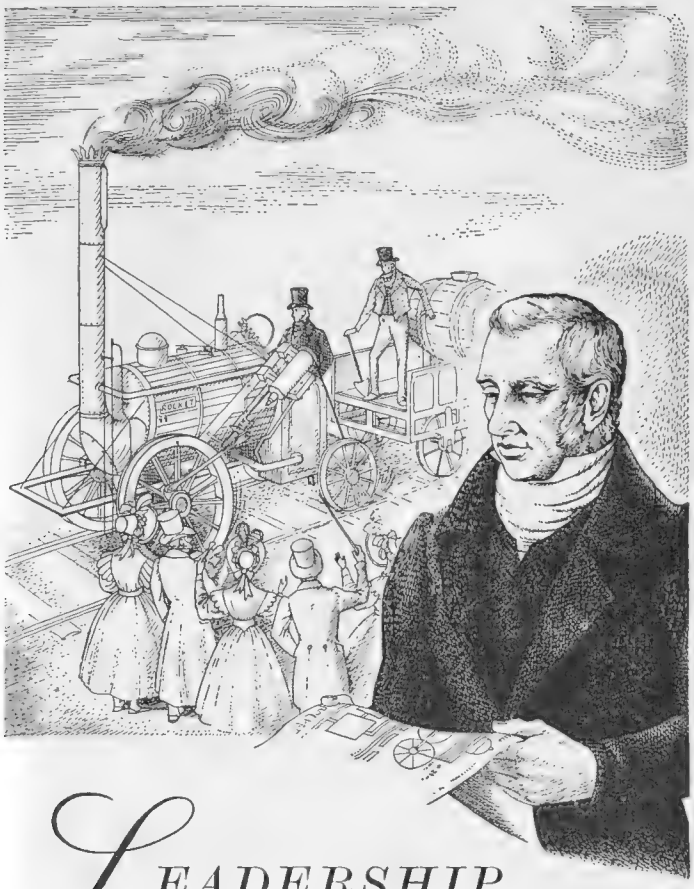
"You are right, Mr. Bryan, I would not ask that of you. All I ask is that you make her happy now, to-day. Afterwards is my responsibility. Give her what she wants *now*, I will see that she does not live to discover the lie."

He thought he could not have heard aright. Her voice was calm, dry and steady, as though she were making the most natural statement; she gave no sign of emotion. But something in her face, an extraordinary stamp of resolution, assured him that he had not misunderstood her.

"At Blanche's age, and at mine, Mr. Bryan, death is not so unfriendly. To die happy—that is what matters. I have promised it to myself, how could I refuse it to her? A little overdose, a mistake in the sleeping tablets—so easy, is it not, when one is short-sighted and forgetful, as I am? And dear Anna, the most faithful of creatures. . . . Blanche is all that I have left, Mr. Bryan, I love her very dearly. If I ask the impossible of anyone, it is of myself, not of you."

Kirby still sat speechless; and the *Contessa* stood up, closing the interview with a polite gesture.

(*Continued on page 70*)



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The Good Natured Man

KIRBY caught the autobus for the station at twelve o'clock from the *piazza*; as he took his seat there was a noontide clash of bells and the slim taper of the *campanile* seemed to rock in the bright air. The bus nosed its way cautiously through the dark tunnel of street between the high houses; once under the archway and clear of the town, it hurtled down the steep country road, where the dust lay on the hedges like a fine powdering of snow. He twisted his head round to look out of the back window; he could just see Salorno perched like a toy town on its little hill, remote among its cypresses. Already it was a sampler hung on a wall, or a picture taken from some old album, which one turns round in one's hands, looking for the familiar features. See, there is the castello with the clock in the square tower; the *piazza* with the chestnut trees; the little, dark shops under the colonnades. Yes, it is just as I remember it. And there (he would add) is the villa where the two old ladies lived; you remember I told you about them, the one who painted and the extraordinary *Contessa* You remember? His thoughts strained away from the past twenty-four hours, forward to the balcony by the lake and Amanda, sunning herself on the chaise longue and nuzzling her face like a kitten against his as he stooped to kiss her.

"Had a good time, darling? Been a good boy?"

Sitting on the parapet with his back to the periwinkle-blue water and the white sails of the holiday yachts, he would smile down at her and it would be easy enough to say, "Oh, so so. I'll tell you about it some time, if you're interested." But Amanda wouldn't really be interested, he doubted if he would ever tell her; he doubted indeed if he would tell anyone, even Charles Holland. For what, indeed, was there to tell? How convey the haunted atmosphere of that house and the two amazing women in it? He remembered that morning—was it really only two or three hours ago?—and the moment when he had said good-bye.

"So kind of you, Mr. Bryan, such a pleasure; no, no, not in the least. Good-bye, good-bye, remember us to Professor Holland." Mrs. Mowbray cut her short.

"One moment, Agnes. I want another word with Mr. Bryan." She half beckoned to him, and he went back and stood over her, stooping to catch what she said.

"You will make all arrangements?" He nodded.

"And you will write and tell me all about it; how the pictures look, what the critics say? You promise?"

"I promise?"

She let herself lie back, her eyes closed in satisfaction.

"Then I am happy. Thank you, thank you. You are very good to me."

Her absurd giggle tinkled in his ears as he left the room and as he went slowly downstairs and through the hall and out into the dusty sunlight. And now, as he peered back from the bus at the tiny speck that was still Salorno, he caught the last echo of it, and he asked himself wonderingly, "Was she mad or am I? Did any of it really happen?"

END

On The Way To Market

(*Continued from page* 41)

arranged on two levels, with steps for pedestrians and ramps for perambulators. The largest shops are at the bottom, with smaller ones on the terraces, and if you don't want to walk up the steps you can take a lift. In Coventry, as in Harlow, canopies are used above the shops, adding a very attractive note of colour and gaiety.

AS far as the interiors of the shops are concerned, it is up to the shopkeeper to do as he pleases, taking inspiration from his new surroundings. I was quite carried away by the thought of what marvellous flights of fancy might result, and felt somewhat deflated when I was told that in the districts now open, most of the shops look much the same as anywhere else. Rather a let-down to walk under one of those delightful arcades or bright awnings and find yourself face to face with the old familiar dairy or multiple store!

On the other hand, one *can* go too far in the other direction. I have had some experience of the luxury super-markets which are now becoming a nation-wide institution in Canada and the United States. One is wafted in through seeing-eye doors to the filtered notes of a Strauss waltz. And there, against a spacious, pastel-tinted background are shelves of bright cans, cunningly arranged, luscious rows of fruits and vegetables, meat and fish gleaming at one from beneath Cellophane wrappers! The problem here is never whether the food is clean enough for you, but whether you are clean enough for the food!

It's nice to have a couple of shops like this around, but my personal leanings are still in the direction of the comfortable dark-brown recesses of the old-fashioned grocery and sandwiching in my order between views on the weather and the state of the nation.

But I'm not quite as backward as I feared. Because in the neighbourhood shopping precints it was quite a deliberate policy to keep the shops fairly small. It was the intention to create something not only convenient, but also cosy, to give a new neighbourhood the chance of really becoming neighbourly. The large, impersonal, super-efficient shops will be kept mainly for the big shopping precincts.

I'm glad about this, because it means I can look forward to the pleasures of planned shopping with unalloyed enthusiasm. The colour, the lovely design, the space and convenience, these I can appreciate. And along with them will still be preserved that comfortable atmosphere in which my shopping basket and I will feel quite at home.

END

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Acid Garden

(*Continued from page 46*)

SO much for the heathers, though they are well worth the room given to them; now about the shrubs. There are many rhododendrons to choose from, and don't forget that in addition to the taller varieties there are many small-leaved dwarf types which love to grow in full sun. You can get shrubs in a very wide range of colours and so ensure a flowering period from February to early summer. Once you've got a few shrubs you can always raise more by layering. This is great fun. If I had to choose three or four favourites they would be Pink Pearl; Hugh Koster, a crimson; and Cynthia, a deep rose. All of these grow quite big. But if you want one of the dwarfs try *R. caucisum* which seldom grows taller than two feet, or *R. haematodes*, which is equally small and produces blood-red flowers.

The azaleas are equally delightful and especially the Honeysuckle type which is beautifully fragrant. The leaves turn to lovely autumn tints before they drop to the ground. The Kurames were great favourites of the late King. They never grow tall, their names are equally fascinating: try Hatsu-giri, a crimson; or Hinode-giri, a brilliant red; or even Hine-mayo, a salmon pink. To have a whole border of these azaleas is a wonderful thing. Don't forget the shrubs I mentioned either; there are lots of varieties of these, too!

END

Delectable Cabbage

(*Continued from page 54*)

and here's a chance for what I might call private enterprise. Cooked meat or fish; sausage-meat; minced leftover of poultry; rice, blended with cheese and onion. Now think some up for yourselves, remembering always that it is better to bind the stuffing with beaten egg, if possible.

I've saved my own favourite cabbage dish till the end—and here I allow myself a brief interval for rapturous memories. Red cabbage. Ah! Its season is all too brief for me. I pickle some, of course, because the crisp, vinegary, colourful pieces are nice with cold meat and nice with cheese, and, in fact, nice! But all over the Continent you will meet with variations of the following dish:

Cut a firm red cabbage in quarters, wash thoroughly, and then shred it, removing the hard white centre core. Put the shreds into a colander, sprinkle with salt, and stand for a quarter of an hour. Put into a saucepan a piece of butter the size of an egg, *or* a tablespoonful of olive oil (which I prefer), a tablespoonful of malt vinegar, salt and pepper, the cabbage, half an onion, shredded. Cook very gently for an hour, stirring it occasionally. Then add a large Bramley apple, peeled and sliced, together with a flat tablespoonful of sugar. Cook slowly, stirring occasionally, for another half an hour, then serve as hot as possible, topped with frankfurters or accompanying boiled gammon.

END

Children In Exile

(*Continued from page 56*)

by mother and nursing staff. The mothers are less strained, because they have something to do.

How different from the attitude of hospitals where the only link with the mother is the telephone wire with its laconic message from the porter, "Condition remains the same" or "Comfortable"!

When difficulties arise such as that of the mother who cannot come each day, other mothers have helped to fill the gap. Constant supervision is necessary and the mother who glibly informs the patient his goldfish has died, or the kitten is lost, or brings a cream bun to her gastric child, is tactfully dealt with by the ward sister in an educational talk. In some hospitals visitors are handed a list of sensible "do's and don'ts."

Will this enlightened system spread? At present the outlook is rather unpromising, though there are a few encouraging signs that the face of professional prejudice has been dented as a result of pressure from organizations such as Women's Institutes, who feel strongly on the subject. 7,800 representatives pleaded for more frequent visiting at a conference two years ago and the Women's Institutes have been fighting ever since. It is surprising that although the Royal College of Nursing, the British Paediatric Nurses Association and Association of Hospital Matrons are in sympathy with this resolution, progress is still relatively slow.

One of the more concrete objections to visiting, that of infections taken in by visitors, was dealt with in 1945 when the British Paediatric Association held an investigation and "failed to find any correlation between visiting and cross infection." Yet this evidence is still ignored by many hospitals which close their doors to all visitors to children in winter months. (Incidentally, large numbers of medical students, nurses, auxiliaries and cleaners go freely in and out irrespective of infection.)

So the controversy goes on, but past history shows us that it is the force of overwhelming public opinion which finally breaks down prejudice. If the most distinguished children's hospital in the country approves the newer system, the public are justified in the view that an all-out clamour for reform is well based.

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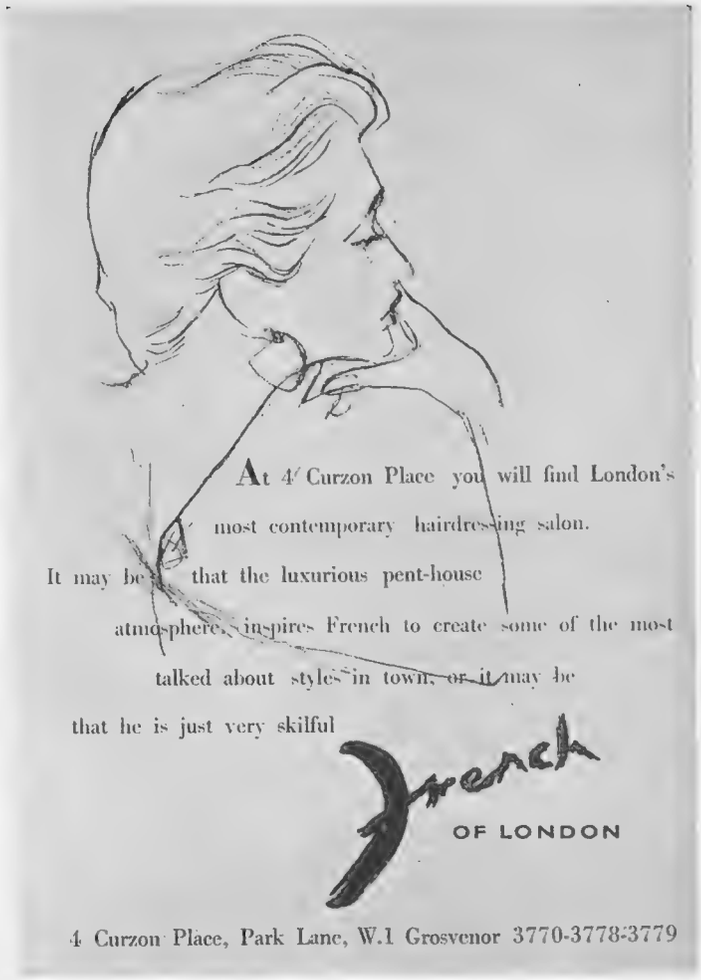

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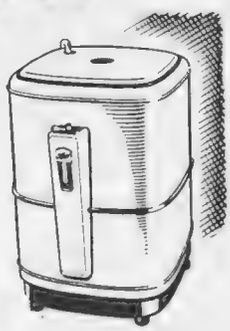

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Eyesight Extraordinary

(*Continued from page 21*)

writer has watched hovering vultures sight a dead buffalo, descend to a lower level, and circle for half an hour or more before alighting on the carcass.

As for "the keen night-eyed owl," this theory too is a little mythical. Owls customarily pounce on their prey after it has revealed itself by some sound made by movement, for it is an owl's remarkable auditory cavities that are its primary equipment for detecting the shrill squeaks and soft rustlings of rats and mice in the undergrowth below.

Nor, in contrast, is it strictly right to say "blind as a bat." It is their seemingly aimless undulations while feverishly hunting the flying beetles, cockchafers, gnats and mosquitoes on which they feed, that have led to the impression that bats are completely blind. They cannot, of course, see in the dark; they can, however, unerringly avoid obstacles and, by the same means, hunt. The present theory, based on recent findings, is that bats make use of a natural radar equipment. As they move, they emit way-finding supersonic squeaks. These are reflected by the obstacle, and picked up on their rebound by the bat's hyper-sensitive ears. The double event occupies but a split second, and an echo varies in pitch, according to the object which has returned it. If the rebound is interpreted as an obstruction, the bat instantly alters its course; if the echo is identified as something eatable, the flier opens its mouth to receive it.

REVIEWING the whole animal order, it is man, then the ape, who sees best, followed (broadly) by birds, vertebrate animals (led by the horse), insects, fishes, and finally the reptilian forms of life in the persons of snakes, alligators, and so on. Dr. Pirenne, of Aberdeen University, actually photographed a scene as viewed through the eye of a bee, and it compared with the vision of a very short-sighted man. Further, as its eye is deficient in the red end of the spectrum, a bee is lured only by the scent of a red rose, but by the *sight* of blue flowers, which it sees more clearly, and can therefore make the proverbial "bee-line" for them.

The probable reason for Man's superiority in direct vision is that, as the sensation of sight is directed by the brain, the superior human brain reveals more details than does the brain of a lower being. An object's relative size, shape, distance, colour, and all its visual qualities, are disclosed to human vision, permitting more rapid, more reliable identification.

At one stage of these investigations it was thought that the colour of a subject's eyes themselves might be a key to the quality of vision enjoyed by a particular species. Now it is known that all colours see with equal clarity. There is a single exception—pink. But this is the mark of the albino, a physiological exception, whether man or beast.

END

Living Sculpture

(*Continued from page 22*)

the remarkable garden started by Major Johnston only about forty years ago, noted for its "naturalness," has fine examples of clipped yew and box that show how perfectly this "artificial art" can be used in even the most informal garden.

THE revival of interest in topiary which started just before the war and continues to gather strength probably owes much to the ordinary man and to economic conditions. The formal shapes of yew, box, holly and other trees imposed by Man rather than Nature go admirably with the rather severe lines of modern architecture. Add the fact that small clipped trees will flourish if properly cared for in tubs and look well in the small paved gardens favoured for town houses and we can understand why the specialists in producing these shaped trees are busier than they have ever been. The cost of making even a modest garden whose chief attraction is trees shaped into pyramids, spheres, birds and other shapes is comparatively high, but the cost of upkeep is negligible, an important point in these days when gardeners are scarce and expensive.

The apparently high cost of even a small box tree shaped into a cube, sphere, peacock or other shape is due to the long period required to bring it to a finished state. Only very slow growing shrubs and trees lend themselves to good topiary. Any tree that made rapid growth would require very frequent clipping to keep its shape and would always appear "rough." It is for this reason that box and yew are favoured, although other varieties are sometimes used. The bay tree lends itself to shaping where very severe lines are not required and holly is occasionally used, generally for hedges with straight lines.

EVERY clipped tree starts as a small cutting taken in the autumn. It is left to make strong roots for two or three years and then planted out. The age at which it is first shaped depends upon the size required for the finished tree. Once its shape has been determined, it is not allowed to grow larger, but is vigorously cut to make dense growth. The small box tree shaped into a teddy bear or even a simple ring or spiral may be anything from ten to twenty years old. Professional topiarists will have in stock trees fifty and seventy years old and, of course, some of the shaped trees in old gardens are several centuries old. Some of the clipped yews are reputed to have kept their shape and size for 1,000 years.

Watching a skilled topiarist at work giving shape to a tree is fascinating. His eye seems instinctively to judge the shape that a tree will take. I watched an expert whose family have been topiarists for generations produce a spiral from a well-formed tree about ten years old. He used an ordinary pruning knife and, of course, no pattern or guide. The concentric groove cut, he smoothed it with small shears. All that remained now to do before the tree was fit for sale was to let it become dense in the course of a year or two, with an occasional clipping. The whole task took, by my watch, four minutes. The shaping of a "table" with a surface so smooth that you felt you could have taken tea on it took three minutes.

Such skill is only acquired after many years of experience, but the amateur who is interested and has the patience to wait years for results can shape his own trees, incidentally saving himself a considerable sum. Trees suitable for training can be bought at a fraction of the cost of the finished product. The rest is a matter of having a good eye and great patience. There are few "secrets," except the use of wire frames to help in securing the shape. A simple shape such as a pyramid will require only a single supporting rod, but for more elaborate shapes such as birds and animals the appropriate frame is required. The frame is placed in the bush and the necessary shoots trained along the wires. In course of time constant clipping produces a dense growth and the wire frame is completely concealed.

ONE advantage of topiary to the enthusiastic gardener is that he can take it with him when he moves. Both box and yew transplant well even when mature. Nurserymen, in fact, make a practice of moving their specimens about every five years in order to restrict the root form- (*Continued on page 76*)

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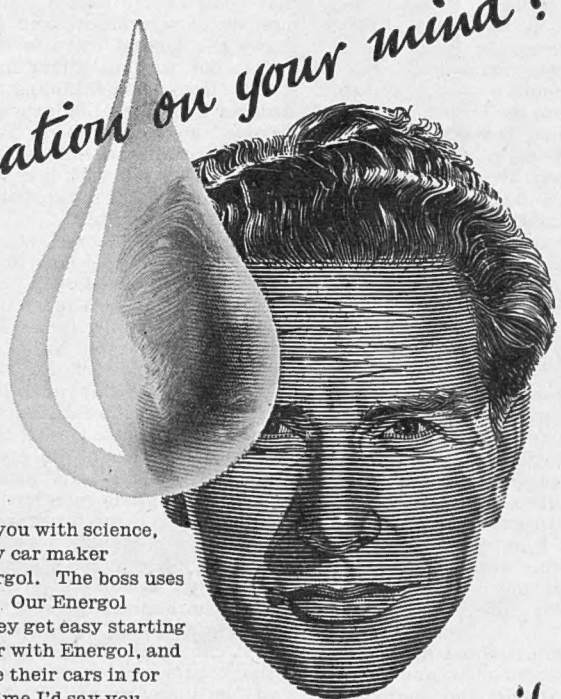

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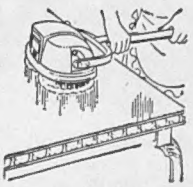

★ ★ ★

ation. Trees fifty and more years old have been moved, although this may require careful preparation for months beforehand.

Some of the most remarkable topiary work done by an amateur in recent years was that of David Davies who died not long ago. He did not start until about 1930, but before his death had produced in his garden near Carmarthen an extraordinary collection of shaped trees. The animals line up to enter the Ark; Leonardo's famous picture of the Last Supper with the twelve disciples is reproduced in leaf and Adam and Eve are tempted in a real garden of Eden. Adam and Eve, incidentally, are not original subjects for topiary. Alexander Pope, writing in the eighteenth century, speaks of them carved in yew, remarking: "Adam a little shattered . . . Eve and the serpent very flourishing."

FASCINATING as this shaping of trees to imitate people and animals may be for a hobby, the new interest in topiary is for its decoration rather than eccentricity.

Because of the enormous cost we are never likely to see new topiary gardens made on the scale of, for instance, Levens Hall. Such gardens require a staff engaged in nothing but keeping the trees in shape. But the amateur with his dozen or two of shaped trees of moderate size has no cost beyond a few hours' labour a year. The trees stand up very well to cold and bad weather, the only danger being to flat surfaces after a snowfall. A useful tip for trees kept in tubs where they can be effective beside the door is to turn the tub round periodically to ensure that all sides get equal sunshine and make even growth. The elaborate eccentricities, I feel, should be left to the great gardens where they are curious reminders of the eighteenth century and to old cottage gardens where sometimes one comes across a single very elaborately sculptured tree which has been the pride of the family for many generations.

END

Living Sculpture

Night Shopping (*Continued from page* 13)

of purchase tax? How "empty" morning hours spelled over-stocking which in turn could only spell "redundancy," that funking word for unemployment? Had they given a thought to the possibility of the public wanting more elastic shopping hours, and why? Had they heard what was happening in America?

If this last remark usually halted matters ("what's it to me what the Americans do?"), it shan't do so here. One hesitates these times to point too often to America, but, after all, did not Cripps start sending what have become dozens of "working parties" to study American methods, and is it not odd that no report was made on shops and shopping?

THE pith of it all is that shopping should no longer be confined to those hours of morning, midday and afternoon when the bulk of the nation is at work. Better for the shops and their staffs, better for the public, that hours be recast so as to capture custom when people are relaxing, having done their stint for the day.

One reason for the popularity of what is boldly called "night shopping" (though "after-supper shopping" might be nearer the mark for all the year round) is that Dad can join in, which he much prefers doing, to giving up part of his Saturday. There is evidence, too, that late shopping finds people in less strained mood, even in a jolly buying mood when it comes to family parties. Merchants go as far as to aver that the public buys twenty-five per cent more than by day.

The new trend began in America in a small way after the war, when shops started staying open until late in the evening, one night a week. Each of the forty-eight States can make its own laws in such matters, though even that doesn't seem to be necessary most times: hours are altered just by local action and agreement.

In future there will be more and more noon openings and late closings. At this stage about half of the stores consulted said they opened at noon on one or more days a week. Stores closing at nine, ten, and even midnight, are coming to be common, and all kinds of shops at that.

In Chicago two of the biggest stores have started staying open two nights a week. Three more are doing the same thing in Los Angeles. Milwaukee goes one better (or later!). There, twenty big shops are staying open until 9 p.m. six nights a week. Miami, Florida, pleasure capital, *would* beat them all. There you may shop in a general way until midnight. At Pittsburgh you can place an order at a department store at 4 a.m. But this is in connection with a twenty-four-hour telephone service.

The new night shopping goes hand in hand with restaurants and visits to the movies and theatres. Families and friends bundle such things together and the effect is notably to give housewives more spare time by day. Shops that particularly flourish are groceries and other towns are following the example of Los Angeles, where they stay open until 3 a.m. Flower shops are another cinch, while all-night news stands are well patronized by bookworms and victims of insomnia.

THERE is an undeniable element of attacking "sales resistance" about the new American late shopping. And this is no healthy symptom when pressed too often and too hard. Yet, over and above this, the novelty corresponds to public demand in America.

Far from being a novelty, late shopping has long been facilitated in more than one European land, especially in the South, where climate and midday heat combined to make for evening custom extending to the first night hours. In France, Italy and Spain, stores and shops with numerous employees may follow their union rules in regard to hours of opening. But how many tens of thousands of lesser shops of a wide variety—mostly family affairs—remain open seemingly as long as they want to!

This is particularly so, the smaller the town. Shopkeepers give to their jobs a strong social bent, sitting outside and chatting with passers-by, customers or not. It isn't work for them, so much as an agreeable way of passing the hours; and when these hours get to be uncomfortable, as they do between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. for several months in the year—why, shops are closed for lunch followed by a long *siesta*, and sales time is substituted from 4 p.m. until eight or nine at night.

Sometimes the unions try to interfere with this free and easy purchasing. I was in a Menton baker's not long ago, when the assistant asked me to keep the bread from view on leaving. I asked whatever for, and was reminded it was Monday.

Let no one think because the French always seem to have shops open that they don't have to contend with shop hours. The forty-hour week has been divided into five eight-hour days, leaving Sunday and Monday free. A few shops, notably for food, may open briefly on Monday morning. Yet how often has one been caught! The long closing would, indeed, be a real nuisance but for local markets and that afore-mentioned tendency of small, family shopkeepers to open up when the spirit moves them, Sunday or no Sunday.

Actually, it is an understood thing, with all concerned, police, unions, municipalities, winking at a practice which eases neighbourhood life and means no more than voluntary "labour." For that matter, the enormous number of shops in France demands that hours of opening be winked at. Commercial establishments other than cafés and restaurants have increased from 1,000,000 to 1,450,000 since before the war. Three per cent are big shops, seven per cent medium-sized, and the remaining ninety per cent small shops.

In the last category are counted no fewer than 200,000 pedlars, barrow-men, and men who put up their stalls at fairs and markets. As business has declined by between fifty and seventy per cent in all branches, it will be seen that a strict application of opening hours is unlikely to be popular with anybody, and where French people are concerned, that usually means unlikely to be respected.

Up till now the department stores and chain-stores (150 firms with 37,000 branches) have maintained rigid hours, usually closing at 6.30 p.m. at latest. It will be interesting to see if the later shopping elsewhere catches on, though, personally, I doubt if there's much call for such a thing in France.

In Britain, where so much is apt to be "closed," compared with the French neighbour, there is definitely a stronger case for altered shopping hours, and for a variety of reasons. There would be the devil-and-all to pay before the Shops Act could be amended. But what if it were proved that staffs would lose nothing while the public gained, and that different hours would stave off the bogey of "redundancy"?

We were recently reminded of the very important part played by shopkeeping in the economy of the nation. We have more shops per head of the population than has America. The total number listed is 551,214—one for every 89 people (the United States has one for every 131). Grocers and dairy shops form the largest groups (134,002). There are 42,659 confectioners and tobacconists. Other figures: 51,346 shops selling women's and children's wear, against 16,905 catering for men; 36,349 hairdressers.

IT is the little man who is still the mainstay of British trade. Department stores fall into the lowest category (2,369). Yet the latter employ tens of thousands and are likely to be in the van of any change of shopping hours that may come about. Incidentally the number of restaurants and cafés—59,133—shows the biggest increase of any category and is not without direct influence on this story. Because of rationing and also from a stronger Continental influence, eating out has become an established British custom. What more natural than that people should wish to link it up with late shopping?

To sum up my impressions of the West End's little experiment:

Shops and stores showed a mixed "3 p.m." crowd when the hands of the clock approached seven. Sales were brisk and no one seemed more tired than usual.

People in smaller shops like the extension least because they hadn't sufficient staff to allow for time off, and were overworked through illness and vacations.

Too many shop assistants "couldn't care less" whether late closing helped even girls of their own kind—office workers—to say nothing of business and professional people.

Later shopping gives husbands and wives a chance to choose furniture, etc., together, which they would not otherwise have. Men on their own are enticed in to buy, when they are sick of giving part of their luncheon hour to queuing up.

Late shopping eases the rush hour.

It can be good for theatres, restaurants, snack bars and cinemas, on the principle of "let's stay up and go to a show."

In fact it can be good for business, which the country wants, and will have to fight ever more stiffly to be sure of. Here is a case for experiment and inquiry, and, above all, for an open mind. Hard-put-to-it Britain clamps all too heavy handicaps on herself from obeisance to an antiquated conservatism informed by puritanism and to the almighty say-so of unions and similar bodies.

1.9.52

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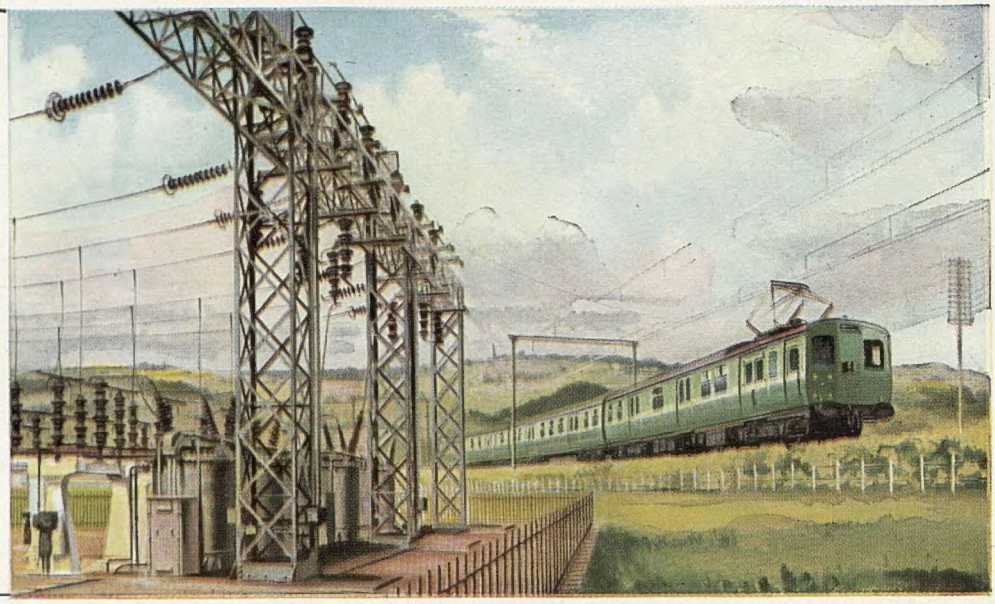

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